

**CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY
IN WARSAW**

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY



Kpudzeka Marcel Msekenyuyfo'on
(Album number: D-4050)

**THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF MOTHER
TERESA OF CALCUTTA (1910-1997)**

A Doctoral Dissertation in Spiritual Theology

Promotor: Fr prof. dr hab. Marek Tatar

Warsaw - Poland 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references to the works of other people which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is written in its entirety by me. It has not been submitted to any institution for academic credit.

The responsibility for any inaccuracies or shortcomings which this work may contain belong to me.

Kpudzeka Marcel Msekenyuyfo'on

Signature:

Date:

This doctoral dissertation is written under the supervision of:

Fr prof. dr. hab. Marek Tatar

Signature:

Date:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
CHAPTER ONE	14
CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MOTHER TERESA’S LIFE AND MISSION	14
1.0. INTRODUCTION.....	14
1.1. THE FORMATIVE STAGE OF MOTHER TERESA’S LIFE	14
1.1.1. FAMILY ROOTS AND UPBRINGING	16
1.1.2. CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING	19
1.1.3. PASTORAL TRENDS IN THE CHURCH DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF MOTHER TERESA.....	21
1.1.4. THE CANONIZATION OF ST THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX	23
1.2. GEOGRAPHY OF INDIA.....	26
1.3. INDIAN CULTURE AND THE PERCEPTION OF MAN	28
1.3.1. THE PHENOMENON OF CASTE	29
1.3.2. AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPTION OF MAN IN A CASTE SYSTEM.....	34
1.3.3. THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE DOCTRINES OF REINCARNATION AND KARMA.	35
1.3.4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPTION OF MAN FROM REINCARNATION AND KARMA	38
1.3.5. SYNTHESIZING THE CONCEPTS OF MAN IN THE INDIAN CULTURE.....	39
1.4. BRITISH COLONIALISM.....	40
1.5. POLITICS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA	43
1.6. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF INDIA	44
1.7. THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF INDIA	46
1.8. CONCLUSION	50
CHAPTER TWO	51
THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL VISION OF MOTHER TERESA	51
2.0. INTRODUCTION.....	51
2.1. ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE QUESTION ABOUT GOD	52
2.2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS	54
2.2.1. MAN AS A CREATURE.....	55
2.2.2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURE.....	59
2.2.2.1. Structure from Mother Teresa’s terminology.....	60
2.2.2.2. Structure from Mother Teresa’s approach to poverty	64
2.2.3. COMMON HUMAN NATURE	66
2.2.4. A RELATIONAL BEING	67

2.2.5. A TRANSCENDENT BEING	70
2.2.6. ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION	71
2.2.6.1. About death	72
2.2.6.2. The intercessory role of the dead.....	72
2.2.6.3. About Judgment	73
2.2.6.4. About Hell.....	75
2.2.6.5. About Purgatory	77
2.3. THE FALL – ORIGINAL SIN	78
2.3.1. ACCOUNTING FOR THE ENIGMA.....	79
2.3.2. CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL.....	80
2.4. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE/LIKNESS	82
2.4.1. JESUS CHRIST: THE REVELATION OF GOD	83
2.4.1.1. Argument from total dependence on Jesus.....	83
2.4.1.2. Argument from the power to forgive sins	84
2.4.1.3. A cry from the Cross	86
2.4.1.4. Jesus’ infinity and power to create	87
2.4.2. CHRIST AS A TRUE MAN	88
2.4.3. FOLLOWING CHRIST AS THE PATH TO HOLINESS	90
2.4.4. RECOGNIZING CHRIST IN ONE’S NEIGHBOUR	91
2.5. THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF ANTHROPOLOGY	93
2.5.1. THE HUMAN BODY AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	93
2.5.2. THE SANCTIFYING EFFECTS OF THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.....	94
2.5.3. COLLABORATION OF MAN WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.....	95
2.6. CONCLUSION	96
CHAPTER THREE:	97
MOTHER TERESA’S SPIRITUALITY	97
3.0. INTRODUCTION.....	97
3.1. THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY	97
3.2. SOURCES OF MOTHER TERESA’S SPIRITUALITY	99
3.3. THE GOAL OF HER SPIRITUALITY	101
3.4. THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT	103
3.4.1. THE SACRAMENTS	103
3.4.2. A LIFE OF PRAYER.....	107
3.4.3. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS.....	110
3.4.3.1. The vow of poverty	111
3.4.3.2. The vow of chastity	114
3.4.3.3. The vow of obedience	119

3.4.3.4. The fourth vow	124
3.4.4. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	127
3.5. THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES	132
3.5.1. FAITH	132
3.5.2. SUPERNATURAL HOPE	138
3.5.3. CHARITY OR CHRISTIAN LOVE	139
3.6. CHARACTERISTICS OF TERESAN SPIRITUALITY	143
3.6.1. THE FAMILY AS A MATRIX OF EDUCATION IN SPIRITUALITY	143
3.6.2. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE.....	145
3.6.2. THE HUMAN BEING AS “CHRIST IN DISGUISE”	148
3.6.3. RELIANCE ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE	150
3.7. CONCLUSION	152
CHAPTER FOUR.....	153
MOTHER TERESA’S MISSION IN INDIA AND BEYOND	153
4.0. INTRODUCTION.....	153
4.1. DEPARTURE FROM LORETO	154
4.1.1. HER DEPARTURE AS A CRITIQUE OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN INDIA.....	156
4.1.2. RATIONAL SCRUTINY OF MOTHER TERESA’S MOTIVES	157
4.1.2.1. Argument from divine call	158
4.1.2.2. Argument from the Church’s authority	159
4.1.2.3. Argument from hindsight	161
4.2. MOTHER TERESA’S VISION OF MISSIONARY WORK.....	163
4.3. UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY AND WORK AMONG THE POOR	165
4.3.1. MATERIAL POVERTY	166
4.3.2. INTELLECTUAL POVERTY	167
4.3.3. PHYSICAL POVERTY	169
4.3.4. AFFECTIVE POVERTY.....	170
4.3.5. SPIRITUAL POVERTY.....	172
4.4. THE FOUNDATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY	174
4.4.1. CAUSES OF THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY	175
4.4.2. MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY FAMILY	177
4.5. INVOLVEMENT IN PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES	180
4.6. PROMOTION OF PEACE	183
4.7. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	187
4.8. THE SPREAD OF HER MISSION OUTSIDE INDIA	191
4.9. CONCLUSION	194
FINAL CONCLUSION	195

BIBLIOGRAPHY 201

ABBREVIATIONS

Church Documents

CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
RSVCE	<i>Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition</i>

Others

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
Cf.	Confer
ed.	Editor
IBVM	Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
MC	Missionaries of Charity
n.	Number
p.	Page
trans.	Translator
Vol.	Volume
WW I	World War I
WW II	World War II

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Any edifice of human behaviour or activity, be it economic, social, political or religious, is built on anthropology: the question of human nature. In fact, phenomena which baffle sane imagination such as slavery and slave trade in their past and present forms, racism, apartheid, the holocaust, genocide, and marginalization are each based on a certain understanding of the human being. Anthropology is likewise factored into the discussion of recent issues like ecology, the situation of immigrants especially in Europe and America, transgenderism and transhumanism. The ancient question of what the human being is remains ever relevant. Nevertheless, human history abounds not only with tales of woe and savagery, but also of heroism, altruism, philanthropy and works selflessly carried out to ameliorate the condition of fellow humans. Mother Teresa of Calcutta is one of the people who chose the heroic path of altruism and brought relief and comfort to millions of poor people. Her compassion for the weakest and most vulnerable members of the society is what inspired this study. It is believed that the world will come well-nigh to solving all the humanitarian crises it is facing if everyone learns to see human beings from Mother Teresa's perspective.

Her humanitarian efforts first attracted the attention of the Indian press. *The Statesman*, a local journal, published an article on January 1958 a fragment of which reads: "Mother Teresa needs no introduction to Calcutta. Her zeal and compassion have touched every remote corner of the city. She has met opposition and the maddening disregard for our vast problem of human distress with a defiance belying her frailty. Mother to innumerable abandoned children, companion to the dying and destitute, succour to the diseased she has carried the battle against suffering to fields never before considered and hardly known"¹. The fields to which Mother Teresa carried the battle against suffering are not limited to Calcutta slums, but extend to other parts of India, and indeed of the whole world. No wonder, she has remained in the limelight ever since her charitable activities caught public interest.

¹ Yeti made this this description of Mother Teresa in an article titled "Battle in Busteland" published in the journal *The Statesman* on 22nd January 1958. Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the "saint of Calcutta"*, New York 2007, p. 174.

The quest to know better the figure, work and legacy of this religious personality has continued to generate volumes of written works. It is manifest in several of her biographies, both authorized and unauthorized, that have been written; collections of her sayings, writings, private letters and speeches; popular books; hagiographies; and documentaries. Critical articles and other scholarly works are not lacking from this list. Mother Teresa is allegedly “one of the most written about individuals to have hit the international headlines in the last quarter of the twentieth century”². Research on the life and ministry of this simple nun goes on still. Last year, Ines Angeli Murzaku published the findings of her study in a book with “periphery”³ as a leitmotif in which she demonstrates that the Balkan periphery taught and prepared Mother Teresa for her mission in the Indian periphery and to people at the peripheries of life in other parts of the world⁴. Opinions about a person as prominent as Mother Teresa are bound to differ. Her publicity has courted a lot of controversy. While some people think of her as a fraud⁵, many more regard her as a true heroine of our times. Gëzim Alpion, with the aim of avoiding bias, highlights some erroneous approaches and hasty conclusions evident in discourses about Mother Teresa⁶. He also explores the nun’s initiation into, attitude towards, and relationship with the celebrity culture, fame and the media⁷. More interested in Mother Teresa’s personal qualities, Annamma Madavath highlights prophetic dimensions of her ministry. She then argues that if Mother Teresa could attain such great heights of humanity and holiness in spite of the discrimination against women in India, then Indian women could look up to her for inspiration in the strive for their emancipation and to be the best versions of themselves⁸. Notwithstanding the vast amount of literature on Mother Teresa, very little is known about her motivation. The reasons for which she was so willing to dedicate her entire life in service of the poorest

² G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, London and New York 2007, p. xv.

³ She borrows the theme of “periphery” from Pope Francis who uses the term not only in a geographical sense, but metaphorically to refer to all sorts of situations in which people find themselves: poverty, misery, powerlessness, marginalization, immigration, abandonment, persecution.

⁴ Cf. I. Murzaku, *Mother Teresa: Saint of the Peripheries*, New York 2021, p. 1-3.

⁵ Christopher Hitchens was Mother Teresa’s greatest critic who sometimes resulted to vitriol.

⁶ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. xv.

⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. xvii

⁸ Annamma Madavath propounded this argument in *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Prophetic Inspiration to the Women in India*, a thesis she submitted in 2015 to the department of Christianity of the University of Mysore in fulfilment for the requirement for a PhD in Christianity.

of the poor have not been fully explored. The key issue of this research is the foundation of her spirituality.

The study contends that the understanding of the human person which Mother Teresa had (Christian anthropology), inter alia, is the motive behind the way of life she established which enabled her to sacrifice herself for others. It, therefore, seeks to establish the close correlation between anthropology and spirituality. Spirituality is determined, to a great extent, by an understanding of what human nature is, the origin and purpose of life, and the end to which human life tends. The work attempts to give a fresh perspective on the study of Mother Teresa by arranging her understanding of the human being into a systematic order. Aspects of the spirituality or way of life that results from such an anthropology are also brought out. The spirituality of Mother Teresa, based on the basic Christian understanding of each and every human being⁹ as a child of God and a sibling of Jesus Christ, thus presents itself as an antidote to any form of dehumanization.

This study is based on library and online research. Mother Teresa wrote no particular work on spirituality or anthropology. Thus, material relating to these topics is gleaned from works like *Where There is Love, There is God*¹⁰; *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*¹¹; *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa*¹²; and *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Gift for God*¹³. None of these books treats a single theme from start to finish. They are rather collections of her writings. *Where There is Love, There is God* attempts a concise and thematic presentation of what Mother Teresa believed and taught about some fundamental issues of human life¹⁴. Each major part of the work is preceded by notes which shed some light on her thoughts. *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light* is a collection of her correspondences with copious notes by

⁹ All human beings are of equal dignity irrespective of their conditions of birth, material possessions or social status.

¹⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, was compiled by Brian Kolodiejchuk and published in New York in 2010.

¹¹ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the "saint of Calcutta"*, was edited by Brian Kolodiejchuk and published in New York in 2007.

¹² MOTHER TERESA, *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa* was compiled with a biography and Introduction by Matthew Kelly and published in Florida in 2019.

¹³ MOTHER TERESA, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Gift for God* has a foreword written by Malcolm Muggeridge and was published in 1996 in New York.

¹⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, New York 2010, p. ix.

the compiler, Brian Kolodiejchuk¹⁵, which is arranged chronologically into thirteen chapters that give profound insights into Mother Teresa's life from the time she left her family to become a religious till the time of her death. *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa* contains sayings of Mother Teresa arranged so as to aid one in daily meditation throughout the year from the first day of January till the last day of December. *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Gift for God* is a selection from the sayings, prayers, meditations, letters, and addresses of Mother Teresa. Apart from these, other writings by Mother Teresa are her public speeches such as the one she made at the reception of the Nobel Peace Prize, and letters like the one addressed to both the U.S. president George Bush and the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. The rest of the material is gotten from biographies, hagiographies or scholarly works written about Mother Teresa.

As it is already evident, the main focus of this research is on spirituality and anthropology. Since both of them are branches of theology, the arguments in the work draw heavily from the authority of the Church which relies on “an examination of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium shown by showing that some particular truth is contained in Scripture or Tradition or has been taught by the Magisterium of the Church”¹⁶. For this reason, the historical, the analytical and the synthetic methods are employed. The use of a historical method is necessitated by the fact that we are looking at anthropology and spirituality from the perspective of Mother Teresa, a concrete individual person who lived at a particular point in time and in particular places. Using this method, numerous records of Mother Teresa's life and ministry are critically examined and analysed to draw relevant conclusions about her anthropology and spirituality. The analytical method is applied in the examination of various sources and materials. In each case, a text is broken down into its individual parts so as to understand each of the parts and see how it works. The sources as a whole are then considered to see their relation – how they support or disapprove the arguments, how they differ from each other. The best results are then gotten by comparing and contrasting the sources.

¹⁵ Brian Kolodiejchuk is a Canadian born priest of the Missionaries of Charity Fathers, a clerical religious institute founded by Mother Teresa and Fr Joseph Langford. Fr Kolodiejchuk is the postulator of the cause of the beautification and canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and director of the Mother Teresa Center.

¹⁶ L. FEINGOLD, *Faith comes from what is heard: An Introduction to Fundamental Theology*, Ohio 2016, p.150.

By way of synthesis, several ideas about the human person and spirituality gotten from multiple writings of/about Mother Teresa are brought together and built into a unified whole.

Themes relevant to this dissertation are organized in four separate chapters. Each of the chapters is further divided into titles and subtitles. The whole study begins with a general introduction and ends with a conclusion that is followed by a bibliography.

The first chapter is grounded on the conviction that “context” is a primary framework for the study of spirituality. A person’s environment shapes in ways big and small their perception of reality; and so, the chapter situates our study in the context of Mother Teresa’s background. It examines her family and upbringing and the prevailing geographical, cultural, political, social, economic and religious circumstances of India at the time of Mother Teresa. Without a proper knowledge of her world, one may not understand Mother Teresa’s motivation. And without a knowledge of her motivation, one may not understand her spirituality, and even if one were to know her spirituality without understanding her motivation, one will not be able to properly apply it in one’s own concrete life situation. This chapter tries to forestall such and unfortunate situation, and serves as the foundation for the whole work.

Chapter two is an attempt to identify and systematize the various ideas of Mother Teresa about the human person. What a thing is or rather our understanding of it determines in no small way the attitude we adopt towards that thing. This is true, as well, of our attitude towards man. History of anthropology reveals that scholars have hardly been in agreement on what constitutes human nature. Does man have an essence of his own independent of the society in which he finds himself or is he wholly a social-construct? Mother Teresa’s life and work were definitely defined by her own understanding of man or anthropology. Hence, she spent her whole life living with, working for and with people, especially the less privileged. This chapter clearly demonstrates that her anthropology was shaped by her Christian faith, and was responsible for her work among the poorest of the poor.

Having answered the question of what man is according to Mother Teresa, chapter three sets forth to examine how this particular understanding guided her way of

life, that is; how she related with sisters in her community and other people; how she prayed; her reception of the Sacraments; how she worked with others. In brief, this chapter considers how her anthropology influenced and shaped her spirituality. Hers is not a blind spirituality based on whims or emotions, but one rooted in and guided by biblical and the Christian understanding of man.

The last chapter surveys Mother Teresa's mission in India and beyond. Her concept of man and spiritual convictions manifest themselves in the courageous decision to leave Loreto and to commit herself totally to the service of the underprivileged people. As a contemplative in the heart of the world she became an apostle to the poor. She ingeniously connected the course of peace which the world needs so badly with the defence of life, especially of the unborn. Despite the social setup of India where people are structured into different castes, ethnic groups, religious affiliations, Teresa was able to cut across all these barriers and attracted to herself people from different backgrounds who united with her as equals to work for the betterment of mankind. From the humble beginnings in Calcutta, her work and those of the Missionaries of Charity which she founded spread to other parts of India and of the world. Many people came to admire her for her works and supported her greatly for its growth. Nevertheless, her publicity also attracted several critics who considered her as nothing other than a puppet of the Church's hierarchy. In all this, an understanding of who or what man really is shines out as the basis of her way of life or spirituality.

CHAPTER ONE

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MOTHER TERESA'S LIFE AND MISSION

1.0. INTRODUCTION

In contrast to the one-time conception of Christian spirituality as “a stream of enduring truth in which the same theories or images are simply repeated in different guises”¹, there is a growing stress nowadays on the importance of context as the matrix in which every spiritual tradition originates and develops. Philip Sheldrake, a leading scholar in the overall multi-disciplinary field of spirituality asserts the need for contextual study in Spiritual Theology as follows: “Context has become a primary framework for the study of spiritual traditions. Spirituality is never pure in form. ‘Context’ is not something that may be added to or subtracted from spiritual experiences or traditions but is the very element within which these find expression”². This suggests, by logical inference, that a good understanding of the circumstances of time and place of any spiritual tradition, and also the psychological disposition of the person or people involved, is necessary for a better appreciation of that tradition. This demands a study of Mother Teresa’s spirituality to be situated in the context of her background and of India where she spent a good deal of her life as a missionary. To meet this demand, the first chapter of this work investigates Mother Teresa’s family and upbringing, the prevailing pastoral trends within the Church, and the geographical, cultural, political, socio-economic and religious circumstances of India during her days.

1.1. THE FORMATIVE STAGE OF MOTHER TERESA’S LIFE

Scholars who write about Mother Teresa tend to concentrate so much on the period of her charity activities and publicity that the early years of her life are treated without appropriate seriousness³. Lack of knowledge is a possible reason for this tendency since Mother Teresa herself was very reticent as to her personal life or family background. Once she remarked briefly: “Mine was a happy family. I had one brother and one sister,

¹ P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, Chichester 2013, p. 12.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 84-85

but I do not like to talk about it. It is not important now. The important thing is to follow God's way, the way he leads us to do something beautiful for him"⁴. Mother Teresa was conscious of herself as God's servant whose work was to speak about and direct people to God and not to the self. Anything apart from God, her background included, was nonessential and she did not deem it necessary to waste time on that.

All the same, Mother Teresa's taciturnity is no justification for a study on her to overlook her family background. Trivializing her upbringing renders a disservice to any attempt at knowing who Mother Teresa really was and the forces that shaped her choices. Developmental psychologists say in this connection that experiences in the first few years of a child's life play a major role in shaping the child's personality⁵. This unit of our study is therefore based on the conviction that the celebrated Mother Teresa did not come from nowhere; and so, it investigates Mother Teresa's upbringing with the view of establishing the influence her family and childhood environment had on her. A study of her upbringing is all the more necessary because her background best explains her spirituality expressed in the risk she took to abandon the comforts of the Loreto convent and set into an unknown path of taking Christ's light to the slums.

A claim may be made that Mother Teresa responded so generously to the misery she saw because she was a Christian and a religious. Such a claim is quite true since Christians in general and religious in particular are called to make life more meaningful for everyone after the example of Christ who came "so that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10); but the submission here is that her Christian faith and religious calling are not sufficient to account for her courage and generosity. It is demonstrative to ask whether she was the only Christian or religious in India or Calcutta at the time; or if the religious working there with her responded to the surrounding destitution in exactly the same way as she did? There was something unique about Mother Teresa and a knowledge of her background sheds light on her particularity.

⁴ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, New York 2011, p. 3.

⁵ Cf. D. SHAFFER – K. KIP, *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence*, 8 edn, Wadsworth 2007, p. 42.

1.1.1. FAMILY ROOTS AND UPBRINGING

Although she is usually identified with Calcutta, the Indian city where she spent about seventy years, Mother Teresa was not an Indian by blood nor was she born in India. There is no doubt among her biographers and scholars that she was born in a Balkan city known as Skopje. But her origin and family background have generally not been given the attention they deserve. The lack of attention is evident in the discrepancies regarding her nationality, ethnicity, and even issues like date of birth. In his 1986 book, *Mother Teresa: The Early Years*, David Porter presents Mother Teresa as of Serbian⁶ nationality. For Wayne Jackman, she is Macedonian⁷. In some publications one finds still other places like Yugoslavia/Bosnia or Albania given as her place of birth. Gëzim Alpion finds the reason for these discrepancies in some historical and geographical lapses. He explains: “The fact of the matter is that Mother Teresa was not born in Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia or Albania, as we understand these terms now, or indeed as they were understood in the 1910s”⁸. When Mother Teresa was born, the above mentioned places were not yet independent states. Skopje (now the capital and largest city of North Macedonia) was under the Ottoman Empire, and part of the administrative province of Kosova which was one of the provinces populated by Albanians. This section of the empire later became part of Yugoslavia, a state which emerged in an embryonic form in 1918. It is probably because of this that Mother Teresa is thought to be of Slavic origin. Writing about her relationship with Pope John Paul II, one of her biographers guesses: “whether the fact that both are Slavs – he is Polish and she is a Yugoslav Albanian – has contributed to their mutual understanding and respect is a matter for conjecture”⁹. Mother Teresa was certainly born in Skopje, a Slavic city, and she and her family lived there, but they were Albanians, not Slavs. Albanians do not belong to the Slavic family of peoples. This is the reason why, in contrast to other nationalities, Albanians living in Yugoslavia were marginalized and were not granted citizenship until 1928¹⁰. Hence, Mother Teresa understood from her childhood the evil

⁶ D. PORTER, *Mother Teresa: The Early Years*, Oxford and New York 1986, p. 3.

⁷ W. JACKMAN, *Mother Teresa*, East Sussex, UK: Wayland 1993, p. 4.

⁸ G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 87.

⁹ N. CHAWLA, *Mother Teresa*, London 2002, p. 178.

¹⁰ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 89.

of being discriminated against. This prepared her, in a sense, for her future work among the outcasts and people of lower castes in India. As already hinted, there is equally disagreement concerning Mother Teresa's date of birth. Some writings date her birth on 26 August whereas others on 27 August. Mother Teresa herself was not keen at setting straight the records of her birthday, and so contributed to this confusion. This was perhaps because she considered the date she was born into the Christian family (the date of her baptism) more important than her biological birthday; and so had no problem when the date of her baptism was registered as her birthday. Despite this general neglect, we deem an examination of Mother Teresa's background necessary for a better understanding of her attitude to fellow humans and to life as a whole.

Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, the woman who would be known the world over as Mother Teresa, was born on 26 August 1910. She was the youngest of the three children of Nikola and Drana Bojaxhiu, both of whom were ethnic Albanians. Agnes' siblings were Aga, who was seven when Agnes was born, and Lazar who was two years older than Agnes. Their parents were good and hardworking and made their home peaceful and pleasant. Mother Teresa remembers her mother for her no-nonsense style and disdain for waste of any sort, character traits which those who knew Mother Teresa say were reflected in the nun's entire life¹¹. Nikola was many things in one. In addition to being a husband and a father, he was a successful businessman who left home often for business trips. But he missed no opportunity to spend quality time with his family. The children felt happy in his company because he knew how to combine discipline and fun in right proportions. As a strict disciplinarian, he took a keen interest on his children's education¹². He could be stern at times and expected high standards from his children so as not to jeopardize his reputation. Mother Teresa revealed in a talk to Missionary Sisters of Charity that her father had a hot temper and sometimes he would say hot words to her mother¹³. It was perhaps from him that Mother Teresa inherited the resilience which made her not to give up in the face of harsh criticisms and difficulties. Nikola was equally a respected member of the Skopje city council. His generosity especially

¹¹ Cf. L. SLAVICEK, *Mother Teresa: Caring for the World's Poor*, New York 2007, 11-12.

¹² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 4.

¹³Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 121.

towards the needy enhanced his popularity among the local people. The doors of his home were ever open to welcome poor people, and he and his wife inspired in their children feelings of respect and love for ordinary people. It is said that “At least once a week Drana [Agnes’ mother] would visit an old woman who had been abandoned by her family, to take her food and clean her house [...] Agnes would sometimes accompany her mother on her errands of mercy [...]”¹⁴. Mother Teresa therefore learned to value every human person especially the vulnerable and to be charitable in her early years¹⁵. Her parents’ generosity was not limited to individuals; they also helped religious and secular institutions that needed financial support and sponsored projects that improved the cultural life of the city. Nikola was involved, as well, in politics and very committed to the Albanian nationalist cause. It was during a political gathering in Belgrade that he fell sick and died a few days after.

Drana sent her daughter Agnes to call the parish priest to administered the last rites to Nikola before his death. One would not be mistaken to draw from here that Mother Teresa’s Christian conviction that there is life after death and that one needs to prepare one’s soul for it was consolidated at this point by her mother’s eagerness to let her husband receive the sacrament of anointing of the sick before his death. The tragic death of Agnes’ dearly beloved father which took place when she was only nine would have created a psychological void in the young girl’s life that she desperately sought to fill. The scholars who think that this psychological state somehow explains Mother Teresa’s early attachment to Jesus whom she perceived then as the Heavenly Father,¹⁶ are right to some extent. Her attachment to her father equally made Mother Teresa a sympathizer of the course for Albanian nationalism, a course her father was prepared to die for. Like her father, the nun, despite her commitment to her religious activities in India, maintained the Albanian nationalist spirit and professed her undying love for Albania and Albanians¹⁷.

¹⁴ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 7.

¹⁵Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 93.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 178.

¹⁷ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 59.

Mother Teresa was admired for being open-minded and accommodative to people of various backgrounds. The seeds of this openness can be found in the Skopje of Mother Teresa's childhood days. It was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural city. So, she grew up in the company of her fellow Albanians, Croats, Slovenes, Hungarians, Italians and Jews¹⁸. Eileen Egan sees Mother Teresa's background, in hindsight, from a Christian perspective, as a hidden divine hand that was preparing her for the work ahead in India that is similarly cosmopolitan with people of different ethnic origins, creeds, linguistic expressions, and social statuses. She observes: "As Mother Teresa took her origins at a meeting place of diverse religions and cultures, it was undoubtedly easier for her to cross cultural boundaries and to view the externals of Western Christianity as no more than trappings"¹⁹. As a nun, she did have tolerant views and attitudes towards people of other religions and cultures. The Christian atmosphere of Skopje contributed to this character trait.

1.1.2. CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING

Her Christian family schooled Mother Teresa in the way of Christian life, especially being charitable to the poor. People like Alpion try to explain the generosity of the Bojaxhius simply on philanthropic or humanistic basis²⁰. But the strong impact Christianity had on them cannot be overestimated. They were devout Christians, and Christianity stresses love of Christ present in the poor and the needy: "[...] insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (Mt 25: 40). It is no surprise then that this chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew was one of Mother Teresa's favourite scriptural passages. Inspired by it, she perceived Christ in every person she met. One can thus conclude that Christianity informed the charity of the Bojaxhius. As mindful Catholic parents would, Nikola and Drana Bojaxhiu brought up their children according to the teachings of the Church. Theirs was a praying family that came together every evening to pray. Mother Teresa's repeated saying that "The family that prays together, stays together" was an echo of what she lived as a child in their family. The Bojaxhiu parents would take their children regularly to Church,

¹⁸ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 96.

¹⁹ E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa –The Spirit and the Work*, New York 1986, p. 4

²⁰ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 93.

encourage them to participate in charity activities, and warn them against the dangers of mixing in the wrong kind of company²¹. That Mother Teresa was baptized barely a day after her birth on 27 August 1910²² indicates with what seriousness the Bojaxhius took the Sacraments. Sacraments were indeed a pillar of their family. As was the case with Mother Teresa, they ensured that all their children received Baptism when they were still babies and other sacraments at the right time. After Baptism, Mother Teresa received first Holy Communion when she was five and a half years old²³. Hence, she learned when she was still young from her family that the Christian faith was worth sacrificing for.

In addition to their family, the parish of the Sacred Heart where the Bohaxhius worshiped was a supportive faith community. Agnes followed after the footsteps of his parents to be an active member of the congregation. She frequented the Church and participated in spiritual activities such as the annual pilgrimage to the Madonna of Letnice in *crne gore*, a name in Serbo-Croat which means “black mountain”. Fr Jambrekovic, a Croatian Jesuit priest, who came to Sacred Heart in 1925 and took an interest in his young parishioners had a profound spiritual and cultural effect upon the lives of Agnes and her mates. He introduced the youths to many things – teaching them about medicine, science, poetry, drama, and even orchestral conducting²⁴. He similarly set up a Christian society for girls, the Sodality of the Children of Mary, and Agnes was a dynamic member. The sodality was “based on elements of Ignatian spirituality such as combining prayer and action and a daily examination of conscience”²⁵. It aimed at helping members grow in personal spirituality, support each other through meetings, perform significant amount of charitable actions. By being a member, Agnes was introduced to the spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola. Agnes availed herself of the library which Fr Jambrekovic had initiated to read books of different volumes and genres. Through this enthusiastic priest, Agnes, as well as other parishioners, became informed about the activities undertaken by Jesuits and other missionaries in India. This

²¹Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 7.

²² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, New York 2007, p. 15.

²⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 9.

²⁵ P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, p. 135.

fascinated the young Agnes and warmed her heart with the desire to become a missionary. Through the information furnished to them about India, Agnes came to know of the Sisters of Loreto, a branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), that were working in India to provide greater educational opportunities for girls. The impact this exposure had on Agnes to make her want to be a religious is left to anyone's guess. When she felt that she could be a religious but wanted to know how she could be sure that it was God calling her, it was Fr Jambrekovic who guided her, telling her that inner joy was the compass that pointed to the right direction in life. The young girl's zeal for the religious life was most certainly intensified by happenings in the Church at large.

1.1.3. PASTORAL TRENDS IN THE CHURCH DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF MOTHER TERESA

A full comprehension of the spirituality that Mother Teresa developed for herself and the Missionaries of Charity demands familiarity with the thoughts, policies and priorities that were alive in the Church in her days. Those trends were not unconnected to world events as a whole. In 1914, four years after the birth of Mother Teresa, the First World War broke out and raged until 1918. The devastation it wrought across the globe plunged humanity into unprecedented darkness and prompted the Church in particular to reflect anew on anthropological questions such as the nature of man and the destiny of humanity. Pope Pius XI is perhaps the most influential Pope of the post-war period. He authored several texts tackling problems of the time. According to him, "these manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives; that these had no place either in private affairs or in politics [...]"²⁶. And wherever Jesus and his laws are rejected, human dignity dwindles and fades away. For the Pope, there was a sense in which secularism and atheism were responsible for the gross acts of inhumanity the world was witnessing. If, as some philosophers of the time declared, God is dead and there is no longer any objective moral standard²⁷ then nothing stops an individual or a nation from destroying

²⁶ PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter, *Quas Primas*, Rome 1925, n. 1.

²⁷ The originator of the idea that "God is dead" is a German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche. The idea is expressed in several of his works notably in *The Gay Science* first published in 1882.

another simply to test its military might or prowess. There could be no prospect of a lasting peace among nations in such ideological frame of mind. On its part, the Church believed that true and lasting peace could come through the submission of individuals and states to the rule of Jesus Christ. The restoration of the Empire of the Lord Jesus was thus presented by the Church as a foundation for the much-desired peace. The Church took initiatives towards the realization of this goal among which was the establishment of the liturgical feast of Jesus Christ as the universal king. Pope Pius XI instituted the feast at the behest of cardinals, bishops and the faithful²⁸. The hope was that the faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration, and be enabled to allow Christ reign in their minds, wills, hearts and bodies²⁹. The argument is that if men submit their faculties to the reign of Christ, the prince of peace, then they will individually experience inner peace in their lives and this peace will spill over to the world.

Before the institution of the feast of Christ the King, renewed efforts at making the world submit to God were already made. That was the case with Benedict XV's policy of propagating the Catholic faith so that the missions will recover from the severe wounds and losses inflicted by the war³⁰. Pius XI actively took up the work of invigorating missionary work. The conviction that true and lasting peace can only come when individuals and states submit to the rule of Christ pervade his writings. He states in *Rerum Ecclesiae* that "we determined to leave nothing undone which might, by means of apostolic preachers, extend farther and farther the light of the Gospel and make easy for heathen nations the way unto salvation"³¹. Prioritising missionary endeavours generated and encouraged a new wave of enthusiasm for the missions that spread throughout the Church.

It was in response to this missionary call that a number of Yugoslavian Jesuit priests left for India in 1924 to undertake missionary work in Bengal, in the archdiocese of Calcutta. News of their missionary work among the poor and the sick that Fr

²⁸ Cf. PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter, *Quas Primas*, n. 6.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, n. 33.

³⁰ Cf. BENEDICT XV, Apostolic Letter, *Maximum Illud*, Rome 1919, n. 41.

³¹ PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, Rome 1926, n. 3.

Jambrekovic disseminated among his parishioners; the inspiring letters they wrote; the visits of missionaries to Skopje; and Fr Jambrekovic's own fervour greatly help in giving a focus to Agnes's vocation³². These left a strong impression on her that by the time she was eighteen the young girl was already convinced that she wanted to be a missionary "to go out and give the life of Christ to the people in the missionary countries[...]"³³. All this makes it evident that Mother Teresa was, in a sense, a child of her own times; her missionary zeal was inspired by the spirit of the Church at the time, and the commitment of the Christian community in which she grew up. The eagerness to take Christ to others would affect not only the decision about her vocation, but other choices she would make already as a nun. But there were other events that inspired Agnes Gonxha.

1.1.4. THE CANONIZATION OF ST THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

The canonization of Marie Françoise Thérèse is possibly an event that likewise motivated Agnes. The religious name of this French Carmelite nun was "Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face". The nun was only twenty-four when she died, but the virtues she practised were so heroic and the reputation of her holiness so great that in 1925, less than thirty years after her death, Pius XI raised her to the altars as an icon for veneration and emulation. Her eagerness to serve God prompted Thérèse to promise God that "she would refuse God nothing He should seem to ask of her, a resolution she endeavour to keep until death"³⁴. She was entitled "St Thérèse of Lisieux" at canonization, and named patron of missions in 1927. If this canonization took place in 1925, and Agnes was born in 1910, it means St Thérèse of Lisieux became a saint when Agnes was fifteen years old. Around this time, she was already feeling called to the religious life. It is thus possible that the reputed holiness of this young religious woman and her canonization increased in Agnes the desire to also serve God as a religious. Could this be the reason why Agnes chose "Teresa" as her religious name?

³² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, 9.

³³ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 14.

³⁴ PIUS XI, Bull of the Canonization of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, *Vehementer Exultamus Hodie*, Rome 1925.

The woman known in ecclesiastical circles and beyond as Mother Teresa was not named “Teresa” at birth or at baptism, as evident in above discussions. She herself chose to be called “Teresa”, for she entered the convent at a time when it was customary for religious to change their names as a symbol of a special dedication to God. What inclined Agnes Gonxha to choose “Teresa” as her religious name is essential to understanding Mother Teresa’s spirituality; but the motive of her choice has been a thing of debate among scholars. Two examples should suffice to illustrate the different interpretations. Arguing from orthography, some hold that Agnes was inspired by St Teresa of Ávila, a Spanish Carmelite nun who lived in the 16th century, since “Teresa” is a Spanish spelling³⁵. Considering circumstances surrounding the time Agnes chose the name, a position that appears more plausible is the one that the name was chosen following St Thérèse of Lisieux. It cannot be said with exactitude how much Agnes Gonxha knew about St Thérèse of Lisieux at this time, but given her general love for the Church, her keen interest in missionary work, and the fact that she was an avid reader, it will be unlikely that Agnes was ignorant of the canonization of St Thérèse of Lisieux, an event that attracted the attention of the Catholic world, especially of novices and nuns³⁶. She would have heard or read from one of the newspapers available in Fr Jambrekovic’s library of the news-making event of St Thérèse’s canonization. How could an aspiring missionary that Agnes was not know of the saint who, even though did not become a missionary herself because of poor health, was nonetheless named patron of the missions because of her love for missions and prayer for priests and missionaries? One of Mother Teresa’s biographers acknowledges that Agnes, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, was exposed to the thoughts and example of St Thérèse of Lisieux³⁷. Her exposure to the French nun gives more reason to hold that Agnes’ choice of the name “Teresa” was influenced by her. This is further strengthened by the exceptional private vow Mother Teresa took in 1942: “I made a vow to God, binding under [pain of] mortal sin, to give God anything that He may ask, ‘Not to refuse Him anything’”³⁸. We cannot fail to see in this vow a reminiscence of the promise St Thérèse of Lisieux had earlier

³⁵ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 177.

³⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street*, p. 20.

³⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 28.

made to God that she would not refuse God anything he should seem to ask of her. This private vow of Mother Teresa is a suggestion of the influence of St Thérèse of Lisieux in her life. All through her life she lived under the influence of St Thérèse of Lisieux, also known as the “Little Flower”. Drawing their attention to her spiritual friend, Mother Teresa told the Missionaries of Charity: “Try to have extra devotion to the Little Flower. She understood the Gospel very well. She realized that she had to become a little child. Read her life – you will find nothing really special or extraordinary but what is striking is that fidelity in small things with great love; that fidelity to silence”³⁹.

This said, an objection is still reasonably raised that if Agnes were really inspired by the French nun, she would have chosen the French spelling of her religious name (Thérèse) instead of the Spanish spelling (Teresa) that she adopted. This objection makes sense as long as attention is not paid to the biographers of Mother Teresa, for they have sufficiently explained why Agnes adopted the Spanish spelling of her religious name. She would have willingly spelled her name as “Thérèse”, but she adopted the Spanish spelling so as to avoid the possible confusion people could have between her and Sister M. Thérèse Breen who was already a novice in Loreto⁴⁰. That another novice also took “Thérèse” for her own religious name shows how popular the name would have been at the time. The popularity of the name was surely wrought by the canonization of St Thérèse of Lisieux and the impact her thoughts and example was having on Christians especially young people. The final point concerning the choice of her name comes from Mother Teresa herself. Eileen Egan, her biographer, reports that on many occasions when Mother Teresa was asked if her patron was St Teresa of Ávila, often called the “great” St Teresa, she would always explain: “Not the big St. Teresa of Ávila, but the little one”⁴¹.

This clarification does not, however, exclude the influence of other holy people in the life of Mother Teresa, but only shows the one person she had in mind when she was choosing her religious name. In fact, Alphonso is of the opinion that Mother Teresa

³⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street*, p. 20.

⁴¹ Mother Teresa cited in E. Egan, *Such a Vision of the Street*, p. 21.

was probably influenced by several famous nuns named Teresa⁴². The bearing their lives had on Mother Teresa is visible in her life in India. A look at the India of her time also aids an understanding of her spirituality.

1.2. GEOGRAPHY OF INDIA

India, officially known as the Republic of India is situated in South Asia and occupies the largest part of what is sometimes referred to as the Indian subcontinent⁴³. The country lies entirely in the Northern Hemisphere. Mainland India extends between latitudes 8° 4'N and 37° 6'N and longitudes 68° 7'E and 97° 25'E. The Tropic of Cancer (23° 30'N) divides the country into almost two equal halves⁴⁴. The Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet at a place called Kanya Kumari which is at the southernmost point of the mainland. There could be wide differences in local time of places located at two extreme points of India accounted for by the great longitudinal extent of about 290.

This triangle-shaped country covers a surface area of 3,287,263km² making it the seventh largest country in the world⁴⁵. From the northern most part of the country to the southern most part is approximated to be 3214km; and the distance between extreme East and extreme West is about 2933km. India accounts for about 2.4% of the total surface area of the world. In the early years of Mother Teresa's missionary work, India was even larger because what are today Pakistan and Bangladesh were parts of India until its independence in 1947. The country is covered by the India Ocean on the South, the Arabian Sea on the South-West, and the Bay of Bengal on the South-East. It shares land borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan in the North-West; China, Bhutan and Nepal in the North; Bangladesh in the East; and Myanmar (Burma) at the far East⁴⁶. It also shares sea borders with Sri Lanka in the South-East and Maldives in the South-West⁴⁷.

⁴² Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 177.

⁴³The Indian Subcontinent is primarily centred on a tectonic plate located along the equator in the eastern hemisphere known as the Indian plate. Besides India, other countries that make up the Subcontinent are Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives. Cf. A. PARIONA, *What is the India Subcontinent?* in <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-indian-subcontinent.html>, [accessed 15/09/20].

⁴⁴ Cf. R. PANDEY et alii (ed.), *Geography of India*, Haldwani 2017, p. 11.

⁴⁵Cf. H. PLECHER, Largest Countries in the World, in <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262955/largest-countries-in-the-world/>, [accessed 15/09/20].

⁴⁶ Cf. R. PANDEY et alii (ed.), *Geography of India*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 22.

Because of its location, India is, as well, very connected with other countries around the globe. The trans-Indian Ocean routes connect India with European countries and, in addition, makes India the connecting link between Europe in the West and Asian countries in the East. The opening of the Suez Canal brought countries of Southern Europe and North Africa very close to India⁴⁸.

The topography of India is as varied as its surface area is huge. In the North, it is rimmed by the Himalayan mountains, with 95 peaks above 7,500m, and extends 321.69km into the Indian Ocean in the South. Between the Himalayan mountains and the Indian Ocean is to be found various forms of landscape. There are fertile plains drained by the Ganges and Indus Rivers; the Deccan plateau bounded by the mountain ranges of the Eastern and Western Ghats; then to the far south there is the tropical rainforest of Kerala; and an enormous area in the North-West covered by the Thar desert⁴⁹.

The country is endowed with a rich variety of natural resources, both biotic and abiotic. To be found there are huge mineral deposits like coal, iron ore, manganese ore, bauxite, chromite, and diamond; forests; natural gas; ground water; and a good percentage of most fertile land⁵⁰. Above all, India has the necessary manpower for the exploitation of these resources. It is one of the most populous countries in the world second only to China with a population of 1, 366, 417,754 as per the April 2020 statistics⁵¹. India's location, landmass and resources made India first a target of foreign invasion by the Persians and the Greeks, and later of imperialism or colonization by the Portuguese, the Danes, the French and the British. The geography of a place has a way in which it shapes the culture of the people living there, and the way the people understand themselves.

⁴⁸ Cf. R. PANDEY et alii (ed.), *Geography of India*, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Cf. N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, London 2006, p. 14.

⁵⁰ Cf. R. PANDEY et alii (ed.), *Geography of India*, p. 12.

⁵¹ Cf. J. SHVILI, *The Most Populated Countries in the World*, in <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-most-populated-countries-in-the-world.html>, [accessed 16/09/20].

1.3. INDIAN CULTURE AND THE PERCEPTION OF MAN

Culture is a convoluted reality whose complexity is revealed in the different approaches to it. Whatever the approach, the human person in relationship with others, with the world, and with God or the Supreme Being is at the basis of culture⁵². There is therefore in every culture some basic understanding of what it means to be human. This section of our work seeks to bring to light the conception of man in Indian culture. But the subject of culture in India confronts an inquirer with the question of the one and the many: is there one Indian culture or are they many? As can be seen from its geography, India has a very large surface area that is inhabited by people from diverse ethnic origins. India is arguably “the most heterogeneous and complex society on earth,”⁵³ and consequently, has different cultural expressions. If emphasis is placed on these different expressions, one may admissibly talk of several Indian cultures. At the same time, scholars, especially of Indian origin, point to something culturally unitive in India. While admitting the complex nature of India, James Manor, for example, calls attention to the tendency of a range of identities which can be described as “ethnic” to cut across one another⁵⁴. In a similar fashion, Krishna Pandey and colleagues attest that the various cultures have been intermingled in India and have given the new outlook to a new Indian culture⁵⁵. Nicki Grihault likewise observes that “the ability to absorb many different cultural influences and integrate them into their own religious and philosophical framework is an Indian trait”⁵⁶. Therefore, there is a dominant culture common to all India that absorbs different cultural expressions. It is to this dominant culture (the Hindu culture) that this work turns for the perception of man in India. The work does so by analysing some common practices and beliefs across the country such as the caste and the related beliefs of reincarnation and *karma*.

⁵² Cf. H. OSPINO, *Interculturalism and Catechesis: A Catechist's Guide to Responding to Cultural Diversity*, New London 2017, p. 27.

⁵³ J. MANOR, 'Ethnicity' and Politics in India, "International Affairs" 3(1996), p. 459.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 459.

⁵⁵ Cf. R. PANDEY et al (ed.), *Geography of India*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, p. 49.

1.3.1. THE PHENOMENON OF CASTE

The phenomenon of caste is one of the realities Mother Teresa had to deal with during her stay in India. She discovered soon after settling there that caste is a dynamic force in Indian life and thought. There are opinions that this system of organizing people into different castes has existed for over 3,500 years⁵⁷. Efforts have been made since the independence of India to abolish caste-based discriminations; but testimonies of Indian nationals ascertain that it would be a misrepresentation of facts to claim that the caste is now something of the past. An Indian woman by name Sujatha Gidla, for instance, insists in a narrative of her life that the caste is still decisive among Indians today⁵⁸. Her claim is in accord with the statement of Narendra Jadhav that the caste system is “still alive and violently kicking”⁵⁹. These testimonies from personal experiences can only be ignored at the detriment of actuality. The “caste” is crucial for understanding social relationships among Indians. It is an important prism through which the human person is understood. Expressing the views of many specialists, Susan Bayly says that caste is “a system of elaborately stratified social hierarchy that distinguishes India from other societies[...]”⁶⁰. Although it states the idea that “caste” is peculiar to India, a definition such as this is quite limited because it says little about the nature of the caste. Its limitations indicate caste intricacies. For instance, debates over the basis/bases of the classification of people into various castes are still ongoing among scholars.

Some arguments are based on the Vedas⁶¹ which contain the earliest expressions of caste ideals. The Vedas distinguish people according to two basic principles: the “Jati” and the “Varna”. “Jati” is a Sanskrit⁶² word which refers to a group to which one belongs by birth. Its equivalents in the English language could be clan and tribe. Bayly opines: “the term Jati has most often been used for the units of thousands or sometimes

⁵⁷ Cf. N. JADHAV, *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India*, New York 2003, p. 12.

⁵⁸ Cf. S. GIDLA, *Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India*, New York 2017, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Cf. N. JADHAV, *Untouchables*, p. 14.

⁶⁰ S. BAYLY, *The New Cambridge History of India*, IV. 3, Cambridge 2008, p. 1.

⁶¹ Vedas are sacred writings which are thought to have been compiled between 1500 and 100 BC. Cf. S. BAYLY, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 13.

⁶² Sanskrit is one of the 23 official languages of India, and a liturgical language of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.

millions of people with whom one may identify for such purposes as marriage. There are thousands of titles associated with specific Jatis in different parts of the country[...]"⁶³. This suggests that with "Jati" as the principle of caste differentiation, there is a near incalculable number of castes since birth groups are numerous. The concept of "Varna", on its part, ranks people into different Varnas or orders following their ideal callings in life and moral endowments, with each Varna constituting a separate caste. There are four of such orders or castes: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras.

Hindus commonly believe that the gods created the four human Varnas from the bloody sacrifice of Purusa, the thousand-eyed primeval man⁶⁴. From the dismembered pieces of the victim came each of the Varnas: "When they divided the Purusa, into how many parts did they arrange him? What was his mouth? What his two arms? What are his thighs [loins] and feet called? The *Brahmin* was his mouth, his two arms were made the *rajanya* [Kshatriya, king and warrior], his two thighs [loins] the *Vaisya*, from his feet the *Sudra* [servile class] was born"⁶⁵. The body part of the Purusa from which each Varna came symbolises the role or function of the members of that Varna in the society. Because the Brahmin was the mouth, the Varna of Brahmins is the sacerdotal order identified with people who fulfil the callings of priests, scholars, and spiritual teachers. The Varna of Kshatriyas originated from the two arms of the Purusa. It is the caste of kings and warriors; usually, it is also associated with hereditary landowners. Traders, agriculturalists and other wealth creators are identified with the Varna of Vaishyas, which came out from the Purusa's thighs. The last, in this classification, is the Varna that was born from the feet of the Purusa, the Varna of Shudras. Those who belong to it are labourers and service providers or servile toilers. Now, by virtue of their inherent condition of ritual purity, the castes are ordered vertically with the Brahmins at the top and the Shudras at the bottom. Besides these four castes, however, there is another group known differently as the Avarna, the Pariahs, or the Dalits. They belong to none of the four Varnas, but rather "occupy an ambivalent place below, outside or parallel to this

⁶³ S. BAYLY, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ *Rg Veda* 2.2.1.1, quoted in: S. RADHAKRISHNAN – C. MOORE (eds.), *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton 1957, p. 19.

Varna scheme”⁶⁶. Sometimes they are also referred to as “the untouchables” because they are seen as spiritually and physically impure and as polluting for higher caste people. Caste Hindus therefore avoid contact with them. A person who is touched by a Dalit or even have a Dalit’s shadow across them will have to go through a rigorous series of rituals to be cleansed⁶⁷.

We have seen that “Jati” and “Varna” are two distinct concepts each of which designates corporate affiliations, and goes by the name of caste in its own right. A Jati is a limited regional endogamous group, whereas a Varna is a universal all-Indian model of social class⁶⁸. Though distinct, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. They rather coordinate with each other to better situate a person in the Hindu society. Kanhaya Sharma articulates the Jati-Varna relationship as follows: “Based on a set of norms, which acquire a sort of meta-legal approval, people have been grouped as Jatis, and arranged as higher and lower entities”⁶⁹. A more precise knowledge of a person is thus gotten when both their Jati (birth group) and Varna (order or kind) are known. The two principles, even when taken together, do not exhaust the concept of caste. They represent an understanding of the caste as a closed system of social stratification in which mobility is absent. History, however, proves the contrary. Historical data show that the caste has been a fairly dynamic reality with a high degree of flexibility in terms of internal structure and functions⁷⁰. In a statement that supports caste mobility, Puja Mondal points to conquest as the most efficacious way to rise in the caste system before the British unification; and gives the rise to power of Maharaj N. Shivaji as an example. Though the son of an erstwhile vassal to the Muslim ruler of Bijapur, Shivaji overthrew the Moghul rule, established his own empire and he and his entire caste, the Marathas which was formerly a low caste, gained status as a Kshatriya caste⁷¹ (the caste of kings and

⁶⁶ S. BAYLY, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Cf. Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, The Current situation of Dalits, especially in Punjab; and any protest rallies held by dalits in Punjab in 1997 and 1998 and subsequent reaction by the authorities, 1 April 1999, IND 31487.E, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3914.html>, [accessed 06/03/2022].

⁶⁸ Cf. A. AUGUSTYN et alli, *Jati* in <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jati-Hindu-caste>, [accessed 08/03/2021].

⁶⁹ K. SHARMA, *Is there Today Caste System or there is only Caste in India?*, “Polish Sociological Review” 178 (2012), p. 246.

⁷⁰ Cf. P. MONDAL, *Essay on Mobility in the Caste System of India*, in <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/india-2/essay-on-mobility-in-the-caste-system-of-india/4090>, [accessed 04/12/2020].

⁷¹ Cf. P. MONDAL, *Caste Mobility: Caste Mobility in India*, in <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-stratification/caste-mobility-caste-mobility-in-india/39162>, [accessed 04/12/20].

warriors). In addition to warfare, Mondal highlights four other means through which caste mobility takes place⁷².

A consideration of the historical data, coupled with fieldwork observations, has made some social scientists like Frederick Bailey cast the Vedas aside as irrelevant to the life and thought of ordinary 'caste Hindu'. Bailey claims that caste-formation is rather on the basis of access to political and/or economic resources⁷³. In contrast to Bailey and those who think likewise, Veena Das subscribes to the view that a better picture of the caste needs the resolution of its contrasting interpretations; and she thinks this resolution can be achieved by the combination of ethnographic fieldwork observations with analyses of sacred scriptures and other normative texts⁷⁴.

The concept of 'dominant caste'⁷⁵, introduced in the field of social anthropology by Mysore Narasimhachare Srinivas, comes very close to resolving these conflicting theories. It acknowledges that people are indeed grouped into castes according to their various Varnas. At the same time, this concept of "dominant caste" also points out that ritual purity is not the lone determinant of dominance. Other determining factors are landownership, numerical strength, education, occupation, and political power⁷⁶. Although studies carried out in some Indian villages show that Brahmins and other high castes are often dominant because of their superiority in all these areas, the same studies equally disclose that "The dominant caste may not be ritually very high but enjoy high status because of wealth, political power and numerical strength"⁷⁷. Narendra Jadhav who is himself an "untouchable" confirms that the "untouchables" are using education, self-empowerment, and democracy as weapons with which to rise to prominence.⁷⁸. Summarily, people are still classified into castes following some innate qualities as

⁷² The other four means of caste mobility are service to rulers, census commissioners at different levels, social processes of sankritisation and westernization, and politics. Cf. P. MONDAL, Caste Mobility: Caste Mobility in India, in <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-stratification/caste-mobility-caste-mobility-in-india/39162>, [accessed 04/12/20].

⁷³ This position of Bailey is found in two of his works: *Caste and the Economic Frontier: A Village in Highland Orissa*, Manchester 1957; and *Tribe, Caste and Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa*, Manchester 1960.G.

⁷⁴ Susan BAYLY articulates Veena Das' view in *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 12.

⁷⁵ The concept appears in M. SRINIVAS, *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays*, Oxford 1994.

⁷⁶ Cf. J. NEDUMPARA, *Dominant Caste System in Rural India*, "Rajagiri Journal of Social Development" 5(2013) p. 23

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23

⁷⁸ Cf. N. JADHAV, *Untouchables*, p. 12.

dictated by traditional caste ideals; but it is also possible to enjoy high status because of economic power and other material elements. The caste into which a person belongs matters a lot in a Hindu society.

Membership into a caste plays a vital role in social relationships. Primarily, it determines the role one plays for the good of the entire community. The Brahmins are the scholars and spiritual teachers, the Kshatriyas are the kings and warriors who govern and protect the community, the Vaihsyas are the ones who create wealth through trading or agricultural activities, the Shudras are the servile toilers who labour in the farms of members of other castes. The “untouchables” perform the most menial or filthy jobs like gatekeeping, delivering mails, carrying faeces or removing the carcasses of cattle⁷⁹. Secondly, the treatment a person receives in the society is equally dictated by their caste. “Untouchables” may not enter temples like others or drink from the same wells with them. A person is not allowed to marry, for example, outside their own caste; although there is growing evidence that points towards interest in inter-caste marriages in urban India now⁸⁰. A question may arise as to how a person’s caste is known. It is not very difficult for the people within the system. In every town or village, people know the caste into which those who live there belong. When one is new in a place, people try to find out the caste to which they belong, and “by tradition everyone has the right to know”⁸¹. Sometimes a person’s caste is detected from his name. The brunt of inter-caste discrimination is born by the “untouchables” who do not belong to any caste as such. They are the scum of the caste society, and suffer many restrictions and indignities which vary from place to place⁸². Some of these people lack access to basic human needs such as food, health care, housing/or clothing. They are indeed poor, deprived and socially backward⁸³. It is they who occupy the slums in cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta. The Indian government has supported this underprivileged set of people, since independence, constitutionally and legally, but their condition still leaves much to be

⁷⁹ . Cf. N. JADHAV, *Untouchables*, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Cf. A. AHUJA – S. OSTERMANN, *Crossing Caste Boundaries in Modern Indian Marriage Market*, “Studies in Comparative International Development” 3(2016), p. 366.

⁸¹ S. GIDLA, *Ants Among Elephants*, 9.

⁸² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 8-9.

⁸³ Cf. Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, The Current situation of Dalits, especially in Punjab; and any protest rallies held by dalits in Punjab in 1997 and 1998 and subsequent reaction by the authorities, 1 April 1999, IND 31487.E, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3914.html>, [accessed 06/03/2022].

desired. In a rare statement reported by *The Guardian* in 2006, the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, candidly admitted that there is still discrimination against the Dalits, and liken the situation to apartheid⁸⁴. The caste, as seen in the forgoing discussion, defies any rigid or simple definition. Kanhaya Sharma correctly observes that “Caste has never been a simple ritual hierarchy because it has encompassed the entire matrix of socio-economic and political relations”⁸⁵. It is hoped that the discussion so far gives a clue to the conception of man in a caste system.

1.3.2. AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPTION OF MAN IN A CASTE SYSTEM

Two different approaches to what it means to be human, which we shall designate as the “vocational approach” and the “locative approach”, emerge from the talk about caste. The “vocational approach” arises from the Varna system and identifies a human being with his/her calling in life. One is either a toiler, a wealth creator, a king or a spiritual teacher. It claims to be based on some innate or hereditary characteristics. On the other hand, the “locative approach” is not so much interested with one’s calling as it is with their place of birth. A person is defined in this system by his/her Jati, a regional limited endogamous group. The strength of the two approaches is that they are both communitarian. The human being is always perceived as a member of the community. One’s success or failure is the success or failure of every member of the community. This serves not only the socio-economic and political needs of the entire community, but provides individuals the psychological support system that human beings need to handle stressful moments of life.

Good as the community-based approach is, some pertinent issues arise from the caste system. To begin with, by allocating functions based on caste, the setup exhibits its oblivion to a simple ontological fact – a person is first and foremost an individual with personal gifts and talents before being a member of any particular group. People who could be talented in some areas of life are thereby deprived of the opportunities to develop their talents merely because they do not belong to the caste to which that

⁸⁴ Cf. M. RAHMAN, *Indian Leader Likens Caste system to apartheid Regime*, in <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/28/india.mainsection>, [accessed 07/03/2021].

⁸⁵ K. SHARMA, *Is there Today Caste System or there is only Caste in India?*, p. 245.

particular duty is traditionally assigned. Conversely, one does not become adept in any profession by mere fact of birth into a caste that is allowed to practice the profession. Assigning duties based on caste is thus potentially detrimental to individual persons and to communities. It is thus obvious that the community would benefit more if individuals are judged by their talent or qualification, and not by the caste to which they belong. Furthermore, the classification of people into Varnas is based on a story with a questionable reliability. The story of the sacrifice of Purusa whose dismembered fragments gave rise to the four different castes is at best a myth with no factual established basis. The uncertainty about the veracity of the story renders the conclusions drawn therefrom a shaky foundation for an understanding of the human person. A 1999 report of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada equally casts doubts on the story, suggesting that it is a sheer figment of the imagination of Brahmins (priests) who developed it to maintain their superiority⁸⁶. The inequalities between the different castes and the indignities suffered by members of lower castes especially the “untouchables” are a good enough reason to incline one to that position. What is more, some Hindus think that the “untouchables” have no right to a better condition even though they live in most miserable conditions⁸⁷. Given that equality among humans arises from a nature which they share in common, it is illogical to accept a concept of man that propagates inequality among human beings. In addition to the caste, belief in the doctrines of reincarnation and karma gives more information about man in a Hindu society.

1.3.3. THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE DOCTRINES OF REINCARNATION AND KARMA

Another window through which the traditional Indian concept of man can be comprehended is the doctrines of reincarnation and the *karma*. The two beliefs make sense when viewed in the context of Indian cosmology. The many divisions and subdivisions of Hindu thought all agree that the countless and differentiated beings in the world emanated from a common stock variously known as the Cosmic Energy,

⁸⁶ Cf. Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, The Current situation of Dalits, especially in Punjab; and any protest rallies held by dalits in Punjab in 1997 and 1998 and subsequent reaction by the authorities, 1 April 1999, IND 31487.E, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3914.html>, [accessed 06/03/2022].

⁸⁷ Cf. R. VISWANATH, *The Pariah Problem*, New York 2014, p. 21.

Power or Divine Being to which all, especially the human being, strive to return⁸⁸. In view of that, human beings are understood as particular instances of this emanation, and every one of them rises towards the Cosmic Energy by way of reincarnation.

This belief in reincarnation is widespread throughout India, and has been part of Indian life for over forty centuries⁸⁹. It is as fundamental to the native religions of India as it is to the different schools of Indian philosophy. Reincarnation is the belief that at death the soul is again embodied, incarnated or passes into another body⁹⁰. Walker Atkinson explains the Hindu understanding of reincarnation as: “The doctrine that there is in man an immaterial something (called soul, spirit, inner self, or many other names) which does not perish at death or disintegration of the body, but which persists as an entity, and after a shorter or longer interval of rest reincarnates, or is re-born, into a new body – that of an unborn infant – from whence it proceeds to live a new life in the body, more or less unconscious of its past existence, but containing within itself the ‘essence’ or results of its past lives, which experiences go to make up its new ‘character’ or ‘personality’⁹¹. This implies that individual persons live in a cycle of rebirths. The people who are alive now have been born several times, and they will still be born many times more⁹². The incarnation of a particular soul is believed to take place repeatedly until the person becomes holy with enough good *karma* to escape the wheel of rebirth and enter in Union with the Divine Nirvana and Para-Nirvana – the state of eternal bliss⁹³. Depending on the emphasis, the doctrine of reincarnation is likewise called “metempsychosis” or the “transmigration of the soul”. Consonant with the belief in reincarnation is the doctrine of *karma*, said to be a major cultural influence in India⁹⁴. *Karma* is a Sanskrit word which means “fate”.

The belief in *karma* has been stated in various ways such as “what goes around will come around again” or “you reap what you sow”. What these rudimentary

⁸⁸ Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, Hollister 2010, p. 39.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁹¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 3-4.

⁹² Cf. N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, 40.

⁹³ Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ Cf. P. KOPALLE *et alii*, *Consumer Expectations and Culture: The Effects of Belief in Karma in India*, “Journal of Consumer Research” 2(2010), [251-263], p. 251.

statements express is the principle of causality that is basic to the doctrine of *karma*. According to the doctrine, the fate of a person's future or next life will be influenced by his/her present life.⁹⁵ It can be inferred from this that our present situations are a result of the deeds of our past or older selves. One is thus expected to accept with equanimity everything (good or bad) that happens in their life as their *karma*⁹⁶; and encouraged to do good that it may enhance the influence of good *karma* or mitigate that of bad *karma*. Ever present among the Indians, especially the old, is the consciousness of the need to improve one's *karma* for the future life⁹⁷. The doctrine of *karma* links the present with the next life; and explains how reincarnation takes place. Rebirth is held to be governed by the law of attraction which works in conformity with strict justice "in the direction of attracting the reincarnating soul to a body, and conditions, in accordance with the tendencies of the past life, the parents also attracting to them a soul bound to them by some ties in the past"⁹⁸. Reincarnation, then, does not happen by chance, but in such a way that a person is reborn in conditions that conform to the *karma* accruing from his past life.

As evident in the preceding paragraphs, the doctrines of reincarnation and *karma* incidentally unveil a particular conception of the human being. A knowledge of such a perception of the human person was necessary for someone like Mother Teresa, who came from a cultural background different from that of India, to be able to work well among the Indians. That Mother Teresa succeeded in her mission among Indians is a good indication that she grasped their perception of the human being. The two doctrines here discussed focus on the individuality of the human person; and consider their nature, psychology and morality. Ontologically, man is understood as a composite of two elements – the material and mortal element (the body) and the immaterial and immortal element (the soul). The soul is perceived as the essential constituent or the real man that puts on the body like clothes that can be thrown away once they are old and replaced with new and brighter ones⁹⁹. The body is of less importance compared to the soul

⁹⁵ Cf. C. CHAIRY – J. SYAHRIVAR, *You Reap What You Sow: The Role of Karma in Green Purchase*, "Cogent Business & Management" 1(2020) p. 1.

⁹⁶ Cf. N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, 39.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, 40.

⁹⁸ Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, p. 4.

⁹⁹Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 38.

because it is taken up only once in a long cycle of reincarnations, whereas the soul endures till the final union with the One Divine Being. A Hindu thus sees himself as a soul occupying a body rather than a body “having” a soul¹⁰⁰. Since a person is essentially an immortal soul that is believed to have reincarnated several times over, his personality, character or behaviour is said to be determined by his use of ancient opportunities. This belief system regards a person at birth not as an empty sheet for the beginning of an earthly record, but as one already inscribed with ancestral histories that shape his psychology¹⁰¹. A question arises whether there is any room for the improvement of one’s behaviour given that it is determined by the past. In response, it must be noted that although the belief in *karma* is fatalistic, a person’s *karma* does not absolutely deprive him of human freedom. For this reason, a moral value is attached to a person’s present actions, and they can either improve his *karma* or worsen it. As the present *karma* is influenced by the deeds of past lives, so too the future *karma* will be influenced by the deeds of this present life; this demands freedom and moral responsibility. This understanding of man has some implications.

1.3.4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPTION OF MAN FROM REINCARNATION AND KARMA

The notion of man that ensues from the two beliefs in reincarnation and *karma* has ramifications at the individual, social and political levels. First of all, each human being is considered as an individual which means he is evaluated not on the basis of the group to which he belongs, but by what he is in and by himself. This is praiseworthy because it encourages personal responsibility and grants all people equal opportunities to improve themselves. Similarly, the belief in *karma* which holds that every action in the present (whether noticed by other humans or not) has consequences in the future inclines people to be more honest in their dealings and to do that which they judge to be morally good. This is unlike the materialistic approach to life that regards everything as ending with the present life. At the same time, the belief that “what goes around will

¹⁰⁰ Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, p. 36.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 4.

come around again” may engender laziness since people are likely to worry less about missing an opportunity given that a missed opportunity will still come around¹⁰².

Just as the karmic idea that a person’s current condition is the result of his previous life has laudable implications, it equally poses some dangers to the society. It has the potential of numbing a society’s sensitivity to social and economic disparities among its members. If everyone’s condition is simply a reflection of their *karma*, then the destitution of the weak members of a society is no cause for a scandal, neither is the extravagance of the wealthy regarded as social irresponsibility. Moreover, if the only means of redeeming oneself and aspiring for a better life in the next incarnation, as the doctrine prescribes, is to accept one’s fate, including their caste, with calm and assiduously perform their caste-based duties, then hardly would anyone looking forward to a better life think of rebelling against the status quo. This provides reasons for one to be suspicious of the doctrine of *karma*. It could simply be a tool in the hands of political elites to maintain power and prevent the masses from revolting¹⁰³. Having seen the emphases of the caste and of the doctrines of reincarnation and karma on what it means to be human, it is necessary to now examine them side by side.

1.3.5. SYNTHESIZING THE CONCEPTS OF MAN IN THE INDIAN CULTURE

So far, it has been established that a certain understanding of the human person can be deduced from an examination of caste ideals. But it would be unfair to expect a comprehensive idea of man from such ideals given that their primary concern is the relationships between castes per se. Individual persons come into the picture only as members of particular castes. This explains why emphasis is laid on one’s caste and not on his individuality. Hence, the caste alone does not suffice for an understanding of man in an Indian society. A fuller perception demands other considerations. We find an analysis of the doctrines of reincarnation and *karma* useful in augmenting the idea of man gotten from theories of the caste. Herein, man is regarded as an individual with a nature common to all human beings, whose present is determined by his previous lives, and who is responsible for the conditions of his future life.

¹⁰² Cf. N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, 39.

¹⁰³ Cf. N. JADHAV, *Untouchables*, p. 15.

The concept of “dharma” or duty proves very vital in either case in the comprehension of the human person. One of the characteristic distinctions of members of one caste from those of the other, in the caste system, is their duties or obligations to the community. It is thus possible to say who a person is or the caste to which he belongs from the duties he performs. In this case, duties define inter-caste relationships. Within the same caste, however, duties are still significant in distinguishing individuals from each other though in a different way. Although called to similar responsibilities in life, devotion to duty distinguishes members of the same caste from each other. This may be detected from their *karmas* since belonging to the same caste does not imply having exactly the same fate. A better *karma*, in principle, means one was more duty conscious and hardworking in the past life. And a person who works harder now and does all that is expected of him will have a better *karma* in the next incarnation than his caste mate who does not execute his own duties well. These considerations lead us to the conclusion that man, in Indian culture, is largely what his duties to the community are and how dedicated he is to them. The saying could then be true in India: “tell me what your duties are and how committed you are to them and I will tell you who you are”. Although they persist, these traditional ways of looking at man and culture in general have been affected by the long British presence in India.

1.4. BRITISH COLONIALISM

When Sister Teresa arrived India in 1929, the country was a British colony. Britain had entered India via a trading company, the East India Company,¹⁰⁴ to which Queen Elizabeth I of England granted a charter in 1600 with the right to form its own army. The Company initially established itself in India by obtaining permission from the local Indian authorities to own land, fortify its holdings, and conduct duty-free trade in mutually beneficial relationships. At first, they were only interested in trade, but with time their interest included the acquisition of territory¹⁰⁵. This explains why Britain that had been trading in India since the 17th century did not begin to seize large sections of land until the 18th century. It was under Robert Clive that the British East India company

¹⁰⁴ This company was a commercial body under the statutory control of the government in London

¹⁰⁵ Cf. K. SZCZEPANSKI, *The British Raj in India*, in <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-british-raj-in-india-195275>, [accessed 24/09/2020].

first established the British as rulers in Bengal after their victory of the historic battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757 which they fought against Siraj Ud-Daulah, *Nawab*¹⁰⁶ of Bengali. From Bengal, the Company expanded to other parts of India and functioned as the military authority in growing sections of India. Through a series of wars, treaties, and annexations the dominion of the Company was extended across the subcontinent, subjugating most of India to the determination of British governors and merchants. The insensitivity to the Indian feelings manifested by the British in the changes they wrought in the political, economic and social aspects of the subcontinent irritated the locals. The Legislative Council of 1853, for example, which behaved as if it were a full-fledged parliament was made up of only European, with no Indian among them. The British administrators of the Company simply lacked communication with the Indian opinion. With political control in their hands, the British mercilessly exploited labour and drained India more and more of her wealth and natural resources. The growing discontent among indigenous peoples against the British triggered the 1857 Mutiny. Sumit Sarkar suggests that this mutiny “might be regarded as the culmination of the older type of anti-British resistance, led by dispossessed chiefs and with ‘restorative’ aims”¹⁰⁷. Nobody normal would sit and see his land taken away by a foreigner and do nothing about it. Though the revolt failed, it made an impact on India. The British Parliament was dissatisfied with the company’s management of the crises that led to the mutiny; and in 1858, the Parliament ruled that the British government should take over from the company and rule India directly as a British colony.

The new administration was initially organized as follows: power was invested in the secretary of state for India, a minister of Great Britain’s cabinet, to preside over the India Office in London. He was to be assisted and advised by a Council of India, made up initially of 15 Britons, 7 elected from among the old Company’s court of directors and 8 appointed by the queen herself¹⁰⁸. Effectively, however, control over the government of India was in the hands of a British Viceroy¹⁰⁹ who was on-the-spot in

¹⁰⁶ Historically, a *Nawab* was a local governor, a Muslim official in South Asia acting as a provincial deputy ruler under the Mughal empire.

¹⁰⁷ S. SARKAR, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, New York 1989, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. S. WOLPERT, *British Raj*, in <https://www.britannica.com/event/British-raj>, [accessed 22/09/2020].

¹⁰⁹ The Viceroy was alternatively called the Governor-General; so, in some places instead of the Viceroy one may see the Governor-General.

India and oversaw the day-to-day administration of the colony's provinces¹¹⁰. The Viceroys shuttled between Calcutta¹¹¹ and Simla, and worked in collaboration with Indian Civil Service officials who were posted throughout India. Following this change of power, the title "Empress of India" was added to Queen Victoria's regality.¹¹²

The new administration put a series of measures in place to avoid any other conflict. Even so, change of power meant very little, in concrete terms, to an Indian because the administration, law and order, and education were still of British extraction and in British control. Internal divisions among Indians themselves made matters worse for them as the British exploited the divisions for their own political advantage. Sarkar admits: "Much more significant ultimately was the encouragement of divisions within Indian elite-groups, along lines predominantly religious, but also sometimes caste and regional"¹¹³. In its administration of such a vast territory that India was, Britain took advantage of segmentations to introduced the divide and rule policy, which pitted Hindus and Muslims against each other. No doubt, skirmishes between the two were recurrent. In 1905, Britain divided Bengal into Muslim and Hindu sections. The Indians strongly and unanimously protested against the decision. Although the British administrators heeded to the protest and revoked the division, they later encouraged the formation of the Muslim League of India in 1907.

Despite constitutional changes to bring Indians on board, some historians hold that no real political power or administrative function was bestowed upon the Indians. Paul Stevens and Rahul Sapra are of the opinion that in India, like in other parts of the British empire, the British did not have any serious intention of giving some power to the locals or any serious belief that it was possible to do so¹¹⁴. Indians did not even have the right to vote until 1935 when only about 10% of India's male were granted that right. Limited participation in the political life of their country gave rise to a general sense of dissatisfaction among Indians, and in this matrix of discontent the spirit of nationalism

¹¹⁰Cf. M. GREENE, *Mother Teresa: A Biography*, Westport 2004, p. 23.

¹¹¹ Calcutta was the imperial capital of British India until 1911 when the British government decided to move it to the ancient city of Delhi.

¹¹² Cf. M. GREENE, *Mother Teresa: A Biography*, p. 23.

¹¹³ S. SARKAR, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, p. 20.

¹¹⁴ Cf. P. STEVENS – R. SAPRA, *Akbar's Dream: Moghul Toleration and English/British Orientalism*, "Modern Philosophy" 104, n. 3 (2007) p. 379.

was born. Towards the end of the 19th century, the pursuit for significant participation in the political life of the country started growing among native Indians. English-Educated young Indians in the likes of Surendranath Banerjea, Mahadev Ranade, Gopal Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak took the lead and formed political associations with the aim of ousting the British and establishing self-rule. The struggle for independence went on for a very long time, having been delayed also by the first and the second world wars. Thanks to the activities of people like Mohandas Ganhi, the British Parliament finally passed the Indian Independent Act, in the midst of serious strives, in July 1947, which provided for a partition into two dominions, India and Pakistan. The transfer of power took place in Pakistan on August 14, 1947 and the following day, August 15, 1947. With the birth of these two independent nations, the British rule in India came to its formal end.

1.5. POLITICS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

Gandhi may be considered the father of independent India, but India's first Prime Minister was his close associate, Jawaharlal Nehru. The two however continued to work in close collaboration until Gandhi's assassination in 1964. As an independent country, India remained a member of the British Commonwealth and also became a part of the Non-Aligned group in the United Nations. Nehru is remembered for his commitment to poverty alleviation and the efforts to abolish the caste system. However, Indian politics, continues, even till today, to be divided along religious lines; Hindu nationalism on the one hand and Muslim extremism on the other. The country became a Republic in 1950, still with Nehru as Head of State and Prime Minister. India was to remain under the leadership of the Nehrus for a long time. Nehru was replaced as a Prime Minister after his death by his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who occupied that office till 1984 when she was assassinated by her own bodyguard. Then her son, Rajiv Gandhi, who too was later assassinated in 1991 by Tamil Tiger guerrillas, took over as Prime Minister. The Congress Party remained the dominant party in India since independence until 1996.

Other main political parties are the Janata Dal, or People's Party, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)¹¹⁵.

But the Congress Party gradually lost its popularity after the death of Rajiv Gandhi, and India came under the governance of the Janata Dal Party, supported by the BJP. The later was a fundamentalist Hinduism party. It broadened its base by promoting liberal economic reforms¹¹⁶. India has remained a cohesive democracy since Independence, and it is the world's largest democracy and multiparty Federal Republic. The Indian Republic is headed by the President who is elected in every five years by the parliament, but it is the head of government, the Prime Minister who exercises real power.

Concerning relationship with neighbouring countries, India has had a not-so-cordial relationship with her neighbours. Since Independence, for example, she has had at least three conflicts or wars with Pakistan in 1947, in 1965 and in 1971. She has also constantly had border problems with China. Besides politics, a comprehensive knowledge of a place necessarily includes its social and economic situation.

1.6. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF INDIA

There is a desire native to man to go out of himself and encounter the other. Since this urge is a property common to every person, human beings tend to build communities. Social relationships are threads that knit together members of a community. India is no exception. A multitude of factors defined relationships in India in the days of Mother Teresa as it is still the case today. India is very cosmopolitan; so, apart from differences between individual persons, its population is divided along many lines: ethnic, linguistic, caste, regional, gender, religious. There was also the divide between settlers, particularly the whites, and the indigenous people. Diversities have a potential of enriching a society, but this demands that they be well managed otherwise they can degenerate into conflicts. Not few are the times when differences between some of these segments of the Indian society led to conflict and violence. The 1857 mutiny which the British ruthlessly crushed is an instance of such conflicts; and it gave vent to

¹¹⁵Cf. N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, p. 31-34

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 34.

the anti-British sentiments the natives nursed. Muslim-Hindu riots which are rampant across India is another example of mismanaged differences¹¹⁷. In August 1946 the conflicts that took place in Calcutta and Bengal between these two religious bodies left about 4000 people dead and 100,000 homeless. The very poor are always the people who suffer the most in these conflict situations. The relations between different sectors of the India society has not always been one of conflict. There are also moments of great cooperation. Such cooperation helps to boost the economy.

Economically, India is a land richly blessed with human and natural resources. India's natural resources, in particular, have been a source of attraction to people from several parts of the world. The discovery of the sea route to India in the 15th century, for instance, made India easily accessible and European powers rivalled to establish links with India. Despite India's riches, a great proportion of the population has always lived below poverty line as Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, once said: "India is a land of contrasts, of some very rich and many very poor people, of modernism and medievalism... India is not a poor country. She is abundantly supplied with everything that makes a country rich, yet her people are very poor"¹¹⁸. No description of the economic situation of India could be more apt than this. As mentioned already, Mother Teresa found herself in India when the country was under the yoke of British imperialism. The British built roads and railways, canals, irrigation works, mills and factories to boost the Indian economy. They likewise gave Indian cities a modern look and built schools. India indeed witnessed serious economic growth during the time of the British rule. The country still enjoys some of the facilities like the railways today. Nevertheless, a proper evaluation of these developmental projects can only be made if the one for whose interest the projects were carried out is taken into consideration.

It cannot be that the British invaded India to develop it for the good of Indians. This claim finds support in the fact that while the British businessmen and politicians were making a fortune out of India and feeding themselves fat with the riches of India, a great majority of Indians lacked the basic necessities of life and lived in city slums or

¹¹⁷ Cf. Z. KAUSAR, *Communal Riots in India: Hindu-Muslim Conflict and Resolution*, "Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs" 3(2006) [353-370], p. 353.

¹¹⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru quoted in N. GRIHAULT, *Culture Smart! India*, p. 8.

shanty towns. In fact, some transport networks were built because it was thought that they would be valuable in transporting troops in case of a crisis¹¹⁹. There is also an extent to which the socio-economic situation of a people can be explained by religion. The inhabitants of India have been adherents to several religions.

1.7. THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF INDIA

Sister Teresa was not going to a religious vacuum when she set out as a missionary to India. Rather, India is a land whose people had known and worshipped God or the gods from its very beginnings. Religion is in fact the overriding feature of Indian civilization such that its culture can best be understood as application to daily life of spiritual or religious principles. A scholar and son of India corroborates this assertion in a statement that “Ever since the beginning of Indian history, Indian civilization has been more or less religious”¹²⁰. India’s religious landscape portrays a plurality of religions beginning with Hinduism, a dominant and parent religion of India. Like Indian culture itself, this religion dates as far back as the period of the Indus valley civilization¹²¹ circa 3250 B.C. In a comment that describes Hinduism, another scholar of Indian descent claims that it is such an all-embracing or tolerant religion that it accommodates other modes of man’s relationship with the divine. “Being a catholic religion,” he maintains, “Hinduism expresses itself in a variety of forms and comprehends all the relations which exist between the divine reality and the human individual. It provides enough freedom for any man to go forward and develop along his own characteristic lines.”¹²² In principle, this statement credits Hinduism for its coexistence with other religions in India. But then the frequent religion-based skirmishes, especially between Hindus and Muslims, experienced in almost all the regions of India, call the veracity of this claim to question. Instead of belabouring a point so controversial, we shall concentrate on the main issue of this part of our study which

¹¹⁹ Cf. S. WOLPERT, *British Raj*, in <https://www.britannica.com/event/British-raj>, [accessed 29/09/20].

¹²⁰ L. LAJPAT, *Europeanization and the Ancient Culture of India*, “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” 145 (1929) pg 188-195, p. 189.

¹²¹ Cf. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Culture of India*, “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” 233 (1944), p. 18

¹²² S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Culture of India*, “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” 233 (1944), p. 19.

is to designate the religions that existed in India at the time of Mother Teresa, and to investigate their relationship with each other.

Official documents of the Government of India recognise six main religions to be found in the country, but also acknowledge that besides them are other religions and faiths including tribal religions.¹²³ Depending on their origins, these religions may be grouped into two – religions that have India for their birthplace, and religions with foreign roots. Hinduism described in the preceding paragraph as a “dominant” and “parent” religion shall be considered first. The dominance of Hinduism ensues not from the mere fact that it is an indigenous and oldest religion of India, but because it is a religion followed by the great bulk of India’s population.¹²⁴ The description “parent” is justified by the claim that some other indigenous religions are indeed its offshoots. Lala Lajpat Rai names Brahmanism¹²⁵, Buddhism and Jainism as daughters of Hinduism. He holds that their philosophy is only an extension or an amplification of the Hindu philosophy; and that their doctrine in essence is a Hindu doctrine¹²⁶. Another religion of Indian origin, in addition to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, is Sikhism founded in the 16th century in Northern India by Guru Nanak and his successors.

Apart from autochthonous Indian religions, there are as well religions that made their way into India from other lands. Islam and Christianity, in particular, express themselves in various forms or denominations. Islam made first contact with India in the 7th century A.D through the activities of Arab traders in the western coast. On its part, Christianity in India claims a history that stretches as far back as the apostolic times. “Legend has it that the apostle Thomas reached India in the first century, and certainly by the fourth century there was an organized Christian community in what is

¹²³ Cf. Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx, [accessed 18/07/ 2019]

¹²⁴ According to the statistics furnished by the office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India concerning the census conducted in 2011, the distribution of the population of India by religion is as follows: Hindus = 80.5%; Muslims = 13.4%; Christians = 2.3%; Sikhs = 1.9%; Buddhists = 0.8%; Jainism = 0.4%; Others = 0.6%; religion not stated = 0.1%.

cf Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx, [accessed 18/07/ 2019].

¹²⁵ It is inaccurate to name Brahmanism as a religion separate from Hinduism as Lala Lajpat Rai does because Brahmanism is not a religion as such but rather aspects of Hinduism as practised by the Brahmin caste.

¹²⁶ Cf. L. LAJPAT, *Europeanization and the Ancient Culture of India*, p. 189.

now Kerala”¹²⁷. While the modern Syrian Christians of Kerala believe that the apostle Thomas visited the Malabar Coast in 52 A.D. and baptized their forefathers¹²⁸, another tradition credits Bartholomew the Apostle for simultaneously introducing Christianity along the Konkan coast. Whether these claims are exact or not, it can be surmised from them that Christianity has been in India for quite a long time. There is no doubt, nevertheless, that the work of Christian missionaries from Europe beginning from the 16th century A.D. tremendously boosted the Christian presence in India. One of the most celebrated missionaries to India, St Francis Xavier, arrived in Goa in the spring of 1542 accompanied by an Italian Jesuit, Messer Paulo¹²⁹. Also present in India, though in negligible numbers, are Judaism and Zoroastrianism. A few years before Sister Teresa came to India, someone penned down a statement that aptly summarises the presence of various religions in India: “Crude animism is still here, though it is gradually being driven back to the forests. Hinduism is ubiquitous, and is still obviously the predominant faith. Buddhism continues unperturbed [...] Jainism has never claimed a large following, but there is still a respectable community maintaining its traditions. Islam claims a large and powerful section of the population with varying degrees of liberalism and conservatism. The ancient Hebrew faith has its adherents [...] Zoroastrianism is the religion of the Parsi community, whose culture and enterprise are disproportionately large as compared with its numbers. Christianity is here – in the government officials, in the Western missionary, and in the Indian Christians; in the Catholic and in the Protestant – growing more rapidly *pro ratio* than any religion both in the number of its adherents and in the influence of its teachings”¹³⁰. This situation has remained pretty the same till today. In this melting pot of religions that India is Mother Teresa bore witness to the love of Christ especially to the poorest of the poor. How followers of these different religions relate one to another is instructive of the kind of experience Mother Teresa had.

¹²⁷ P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, p. 74.

¹²⁸ Cf P. ZACHARIA, *The Surprisingly Early History of Christianity in India*, “Smithsonian Journeys Quarterly”, February 19, 2016 in <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/how-christianity-came-to-india-kerala-180958117/>. [accessed 25/07/2019].

¹²⁹ Cf. B. COMERFORD, *The Pilgrim’s Story: The Life and Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola*, Chicago 2021, p. 74-75.

¹³⁰ A. WOODBURNE, *The Present Religious Situation in India*, “The Journal of Religion” 3 (1923) pp. 387-397, p. 387-388.

An aspect common to many, if not all, religions is that they are by nature missionary; each seeks to grow numerically and in influence. This is born of the belief of each missionary religion that it possesses an ultimate answer to the question of human salvation. It thus feels duty bound to spread itself all over the world so that everyman at any corner of the world might be saved. P. Sheldrake observes with reference to Christianity: “the instinct actively to proclaim the message of God’s salvation to the whole world has often been a powerful one”¹³¹. That being the case, do we have a reason to be surprised if rivalry ensues when two or more religions, each of which makes this absolute claim, coincide as is the case in India? Competition then is one of the characteristics natural to the relationship among the various religions that coexist in India. Sometimes this degenerates into physical violence. India has had her own share of the scandal arising from the realization that religion which is supposed to advocate for peace is the cause of much wrangling and conflict leading to bloodshed and suffering among the people. Important to note here is the fact that some of the conflicts are a result of the politicization of religion¹³². How will India ever forget the violence unleashed between Hindus and Muslims at the time of the partition between India and Pakistan? This and several other religious conflicts that almost all the parts of India have witnessed have marred the history of that otherwise beautiful country. Some of the poor people Mother Teresa and her sisters of charity had to care for were victims of these conflicts. Conflict, however, does not tell the whole story of the relationship between religions in India.

Followers of different religions do indeed see the need of peaceful coexistence and make efforts to understand and live with one another. Religious tolerance – even if only in theory – is a value in religions like Hinduism and Christianity. There are known instances where Hindus took part in Christian festivals; there are Christian hymns composed by popular Hindu and Muslim artists; and the Kurisumala Ashram stands as a living witness of an attempt to harmonize Indian religiosity and Christian spirituality¹³³.

¹³¹P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, p. 67.

¹³² Cf A. FRANCIS et alii, *Religion and Conflict Attribution: An Empirical Study of the Religious Meaning System of Christian, Muslim and Hindu Students in Tamil Nadu, India*, Boston 2015, p. 8.

¹³³ Cf P. ZACHARIA, *The Surprisingly Early History of Christianity in India*, “Smithsonian Journeys Quarterly”, February 19, 2016 in <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/how-christianity-came-to-india-kerala-180958117/>, [accessed 21/04/2021].

Though Catholic, this monastery welcomes people of all religions as long as they are seekers of God. Religious diversity is an undeniable reality of the Indian society. Other dimensions of India could still be highlighted, but everything cannot be mentioned.

1.8. CONCLUSION

Mother Teresa's upbringing endowed her with both human and Christian values; and her vocation led her to India, a multi-religious and cosmopolitan country with few very rich people and many poor people suffering all forms of want. According to the predominant India culture, the value of a person depends on the circumstances of his/her birth. But Mother Teresa knew that every human being is equal in dignity before God. Surrounded by a lot of suffering and inspired by her own concept of the human person, Mother Teresa decided against all odds to do something to ameliorate the conditions of the suffering people around her so as to uphold their human dignity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL VISION OF MOTHER TERESA

2.0. INTRODUCTION

Having contextualized this study in the first chapter, we shall now proceed to look at what Mother Teresa understood by the human being. Anthropology is proposed as a hermeneutical key to interpreting her spirituality and work. Joseph Ratzinger's statement that "the question of what we do is decided by the ground of what we are"¹ lends credence to this approach. I dare add that besides what we are, what we do is also determined, to some degree, by our understanding of what or who we are. Flowing from this conviction, the current chapter investigates the doctrine of the human being which underlies Mother Teresa's life and work.

In a milieu of religious pluralism that India is, and in which Christianity is regarded as a minority and foreign religion, Mother Teresa unashamedly declared her Christian faith and identity as a Catholic nun². The pronouncement was made in full realization that Christianity endows the baptized not only with a name by which they are called but, above all, gives them a unique way of interpreting reality. The Christian interpretation of reality includes their understanding of man. Luis Ladaria means exactly this when he writes that Christianity can and must "proclaim a particular idea of the human being, which in many respects will coincide with the one offered by philosophy and the human sciences and which ought to be enriched by their contributions, but which will also possess an inalienable originality"³. Christian anthropology also enriches other forms of anthropology by adding into the understanding of man what cannot be gotten from philosophy or human sciences. Mother Teresa's Christian identity gives hint to the anthropological tenet to which she subscribed; an anthropology that considers the human

¹ J. RATZINGER, *'In the Beginning...': A Catholic Understanding of Creation and the Fall*, trans. B. Ramsey, London 1990, p. 100.

² Cf JOHN PAUL II, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)* in: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031019_madre-teresa_en.html, [accessed 26/08/20].

³ L. LADARIA, CHRISTIAN *Anthropology*, in: R. LATOURELLE – R. FISICHELLA (ed.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York 1994, p. 22.

being from the perspective of God. Such an anthropology “suggests that ideas of human nature cannot in the last resort be separated from questions about God”⁴. Nonetheless, God is increasingly being doubted, if not altogether rejected, in contemporary Western societies and many people are entertaining the possibility of subsisting apart from belief in God⁵. Therefore, before delving into the God-centred anthropology which Mother Teresa embraced, it might be wise to consider whether such an anthropology still makes sense today.

2.1. ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE QUESTION ABOUT GOD

The anthropological question and the question about God have been linked together in creation myths that exist in cultures around the world thereby expressing a universal and age-old belief that the human being has his origin in God or the gods. Such is the case with the Hindu creation myth we saw in the first chapter whose central claim is that the gods created the four human Varnas from the bloody sacrifice of the Purusa. The narrative makes the assertion that the gods exist; that humans were created by them; and that the Varna, place or duty of each person in the world, depends on the part of the Purusa from which he or she was made. Beyond the realm of mythology, the relationship between the anthropological question and the question about God has also been considered to be important by scholars among whom are theologians. Roger Trigg states, against the backdrop of theological anthropology, that “the problem of who we as humans really are and of our place in the world leads us immediately to the question whether we have been created by a God or not”⁶. Whether or not we have been created by a God begs the question: is there God in the first place?

The existence of God has been more or less taken for granted for much of human history⁷, but now God’s existence is increasingly being put to question. Someone describes it as “the million-dollar question haunting the minds of almost everyone these days, whether or not we believe that God exists”⁸. There are people who argue against

⁴ R. TRIGG, *Theological Anthropology*, in: P. BYRNE – L. HOULDEN (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, London 2003, p. 453.

⁵ Cf. R. BARRON, *Light from Light: A Theological Reflection on the Nicene Creed*, Park Ridge 2021, p. 7-8.

⁶ R. TRIGG, *Theological Anthropology*, p. 453.

⁷ Cf. R. BARRON, *Light from Light*, p. 7.

⁸ G. VERSCHUUREN, *A Catholic Scientist Proves God Exists*, Manchester 2019, p. ix.

the existence of God. The Anglo-American journalist and anti-theist, Christopher Hitchens, holds that God is not great⁹; the British biologist, ethologist and atheist, Richard Dawkins, thinks God is a delusion and intends to sway his religious readers to atheism¹⁰; and with the aim to “employ the truth of science to destroy the myth of religions”¹¹, Dan Brown asks whether God will survive science. Common among contemporary atheists is the assumption that religion and science are incompatible; and if science is true, as surely it is, then religion must be false. On the contrary, other eminent scholars are of the opinion that science and religion do not contradict each other since they ask and answer questions that are qualitatively different. Some have gone even a step further to demonstrate that faith in God was actually the motor that drove the rise of modern science. C.S. Lewis puts it pithily: “Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator”¹². Related to the argument that the idea of God and science are compatible, arguments are equally put forth to demonstrate God’s existence. That is what the Dutch human biologist and philosopher of science, Gerard Verschuuren, does in his book: *A Catholic Scientist Proves God Exists*. Frank Turek, an American Christian apologist, argues likewise for the falsity of atheism and the truth of Christianity¹³. After investigating the relationship between God and science in several of his works, a Northern Irish mathematician, bioethicist and Christian apologist, John Lennox, comes to the conclusion that “God will more than survive science”¹⁴. The last but not the least person to be mentioned is Bishop Robert Barron who painstakingly makes a case for the transcendence and retains his conviction that “many dilemmas and conundrums are cleared up the moment a person comes to grasp what serious Christians mean by ‘God’”¹⁵. It is beyond the scope of this work to go into the details of this debate, but what is important for our purpose is that there is no lack of substantive arguments to the effect that belief in God is reasonable. In an existential way, Mother Teresa was

⁹ Hitchens argues this out in his book, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, New York 2007.

¹⁰ Cf. R. DAWKINS, *The God Delusion*, London 2006, p. 5.

¹¹ D. BROWN, *Origin*, New York 2017, p. 53.

¹² C. LEWIS, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, New York 1978, p. 106.

¹³ Turek’s arguments are found in his masterpiece: *Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make their Case*, 2014.

¹⁴ J. LENNOX, *2084: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*, Grand Rapids 2020, p. 15.

¹⁵ R. BARRON, *Light from Light*, p. 7.

convinced that, in the end, no matter how much we talk, there must be a God somewhere¹⁶. Christian anthropology that shaped her way of looking at the human being is founded on this belief and has its sources in the Scriptures, the Church's Tradition and the Magisterium.

2.2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS

Nothing seems more appropriate to usher in our analyses than the Psalmist's exclamation: τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μνησθήσῃ αὐτοῦ; ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι ἐπισκέπτη αὐτόν; (Ps 8:4). The Greek term ἄνθρωπος employed in this translation is masculine in its grammatical form; this perhaps constitutes part of the reason why some English versions translate it as "man" such that the whole sentence reads: "what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?" (Ps 8:4 [RSVCE])¹⁷. Ἀνθρωπος, however, does not suggest the exclusion of the female. Its meaning is quite explicit in the Polish translation that renders it as *człowiek*¹⁸ which means "a human being", rather than *mężczyzna* which signifies "man" as opposed to "woman". The inclusive nature of ἄνθρωπος is also certainly the reason why some English translation use "the human being" in place of "man". In *The New Jerusalem Bible*, for example, Ps 8:4 reads: "What are human beings that you spare a thought for them, or the child of Adam that you care for him?". To state that the meaning of ἄνθρωπος is inclusive is not to imply, however, that the Bible versions that translate it as "man" are wrong. It is rather to indicate that "man" in that context is generic. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* shows proof of the acquaintance of the English world with the generic sense of "man" by including the following among the definitions of that term: "an individual human"¹⁹, "the human race"²⁰, and "a bipedal primate mammal (Homo Sapiens) that is anatomically related to the great apes but distinguished by notable development of the brain with a resultant capacity for articulate speech and abstract reasoning, and is the

¹⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 6.

¹⁷ The question "what is man?" is found in several other biblical passages such as Ps 144:3; Job 7:17; Hebrews 2:6-9.

¹⁸ In the Polish translation, the question: "What is man?" is found rather in Verse 5 of the eighth chapter of the book of Psalms and reads: *czym jest człowiek...?* Cf. *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu: Biblia Rodzinna*, Częstochowa 2014, p. 501.

¹⁹ MERRIAM-WEBSTER, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/man>, [accessed 25/09/2021].

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

sole living representative of the hominid family”²¹. This makes it clear enough that there is a generic sense of the term “man”. After putting “man” in the right perspective in which the term is sometimes employed in this work, as elsewhere, we can then proceed with our analysis.

The question: “what is man?” is rhetorical in the context of Ps 8:4 and rather articulates a fascination at God’s unfathomable concern for man than seek for an answer. Justin Brierley comments: “King David’s sense of insignificance in the face of the vastness of the cosmos is even more acute in an age when observations of the universe by modern science make us realize just how truly tiny humans and the ‘pale blue dot’ they live upon are in the grand scheme of things. Was this all really set up with humans in mind? Are we significant in this vast cosmos?”²². When understood in an interrogative sense, “what is man?” ranks among the big questions the human being has asked and continues to ask himself. It is a question that includes several other questions regarding man’s origin, destiny, structure, place and role in the world, relation to others and his ultimate goal. John Lennox says that the questions of origin and destiny: where do I come from, and where am I going?, are of particular importance because “Our answer to the first shapes our concepts of who we are, and our answer to the second gives us goals to live for”²³. Taken together, the responses to all these questions frame our understanding of what it means to be human. Mother Teresa wrote no lengthy or systematic discourse on the subject of man, but a certain understanding of the human being or anthropology underlies her words and actions, an anthropology shaped by the Bible and the Christian faith. The elements of this anthropology is what this chapter seeks to quarry out.

2.2.1. MAN AS A CREATURE

Whether or not man is a creature is a question that touches that of human origin; and the origin of man is a critical element of anthropology for it serves as a window into what the human being is. Worldviews prove to have a strong influence on answers to

²¹ MERRIAM-WEBSTER, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/man>, [accessed 25/09/2021].

²² J. BRIERLEY, *Unbelievable?: Why, after Ten Years of Talking with Atheist, I’m still a Christian*, London 2017, p. 24.

²³ J. LENNOX, 2084: *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*, p. 11.

this important question. Naturalism, for example, limits itself to matter and energy supposedly interacting according to the blind forces of nature. As a consequence, humans and the world they inhabit are no more than chance by-products of an unguided set of physical processes²⁴. Such a view conflicts with Mother Teresa's whose Christian faith placed her among those who acknowledge the reality of matter and energy, but deny that they (matter and energy) constitute the fundamental reality. For her, man is a creature of an intelligent and loving God with his origin in the Creator's will and his aim to love and be loved²⁵. Though the Christian concept of God which Mother Teresa had differs significantly from the Hindu concept, the two religions do agree that the human being is a creature. The theme of human creation that frequently recurs in Mother Teresa's instructions and speeches has its sources in the Bible according to which man, like everything else in the universe, was designed by God (Cf. Gen.1:26-28; 2:4-24). The arguments for God's existence is still opened to debate, but the position that God exists is one that most makes sense of human existence²⁶; and it is on this position that Mother Teresa's anthropology hinges.

As stated in the Scriptures and upheld by Mother Teresa, the human being is special because he is created in God's image²⁷ and likeness²⁸. What "image" and "likeness" exactly mean and the relationship between the two have been contentious among biblical scholars and theologians: do the two terms denote the same or different realities? It seems helpful, in an attempt at resolving this difficulty, to have a look at how the two terms appear in the Genesis account of creation. In *The New Jerusalem Bible*, the phrasing of Gen. 1:26 where "image" and "likeness" occur does not use the conjunction "and". Instead, the noun phrase containing "likeness" is put in apposition to that containing "image". It reads: "God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, [...]'" This phrasing gives rise to the question of whether "image" and "likeness" refer to the same reality or they express different things. "This biblical narrative has always been very inspiring and intriguing [...] The diversity of

²⁴ Cf. J. BRIERLEY, *Unbelievable?*, p. 28.

²⁵ Cf. I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 159.

²⁶ Cf. J. BRIERLEY, *Unbelievable?*, p. 22-50.

²⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 72.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 34.

authors, ideas, and views illustrates the variety of emphases in the interpretations of this ‘image and likeness’²⁹.

The grammatical construction of that phrase suggests that “likeness” is an explanatory equivalent of “image”. The two terms can hence be understood, from a grammatical standpoint, to be referring to the same reality. St Gregory of Nyssa seems to have this in mind when he says that human nature by likeness to God was made a living image³⁰. Roger Whybray, likewise, thinks that that actually is the case. “The terms ‘image’ and ‘likeness’”, he says, “are probably not to be differentiated: the double phrase is simply for emphasis”³¹. Nevertheless, history of anthropology testifies that some scholars have made a distinction between “image” and “likeness” starting from the very first centuries of Christianity³². Among these is St Irenaeus of Lyons. He explains the difference between “image” and “likeness” or “similitude” in the context of the fall. According to him, man lost the “similitude” or “likeness” of God at the fall, but never lost the “image” of God. When the Son of God came, he re-established the “similitude” of God in man by assimilating man to the invisible Father³³. St Irenaeus’ argument does not seem to follow from the grammatical construction of Gen. 1:26, but it appears to be the most suited theologically to explain the condition of fallen man before the redemption.

All the same, the context in which “image” and “likeness” are used gives a hint that the two terms, whether they mean the same thing or not, define human beings in resembling God in a way that is different from animals. The nature of this resemblance is not clear from the biblical text, but since God is pure spirit with no modicum of materiality in him, common sense points the resemblance to something spiritual. That will correspond, in the second account, with the breath of life that Yahweh God himself

²⁹ M. TATAR, *Structure of Man in the Biblical Act of Creation*, “Analecta Cracoviensia” 44 (2012), [192-198] p. 196-197.

³⁰ Cf. GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, IV,1, in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022]

³¹ R. WHYBRAY, *Genesis*, in J. BARTON – J. MUDDISON (ed.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, New York 2001, p.43.

³² Cf. O. HORBAN et alii, *Theological Anthropology: Open Questions of the Greek Spiritual Tradition*, “ASTRA Salvensis” 1(2020), [25-36], p. 26.

³³ Cf. IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, Bk V, 16,2., in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103516.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

blew into the man's nostrils, making man to be a living spirit (Cf. Gen. 2:7). R. Whybray opines, along this line, that: "It is more probable, however, that some less material resemblance is intended: that human beings, in distinction from the animals, possess the unique capacity to communicate meaningfully with God, or – particularly with reference to the animals – are God's representatives or viceregents on earth"³⁴. Though Whybray refrains from a categorical claim, his overall argument leans to the position that "image" and "likeness" designate something immaterial, the capacity for intelligible communication with God. For St Gregory, "image" and "likeness" speak of virtue, immortality, righteousness, purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from evil³⁵.

On her part, Mother Teresa is silent about the relationship between "image" and "likeness", but her usage of the two terms is indicative of the understanding she must have had of the relationship between them. Though she makes frequent use of the two terms in an anthology of her teachings, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, there is nowhere that the two are employed all at once: she simply uses either "image" or "likeness". When talking in relation to the creation of human beings, she says at one instance that "He [God] has created us in His own likeness for greater things – to love and be loved"³⁶. And in another occasion: "Something of His [God's] beauty is in each person. We are made to the image of God"³⁷. A possible explanation for not combining the two terms is that she perhaps understood them synonymously such that it would have been tautological to use them at one and the same time. The similarity to one another of the contexts in which "image" and "likeness" appear makes more compelling the argument that Mother Teresa understood the two terms to be synonyms. More important, however, is what she meant by "image" or "likeness". As already indicated, these are terms drawn from the biblical creation story in Genesis that speak of man's unique resemblance to God. Mother Teresa considers this condition of being created in God's image or likeness as that which makes for human greatness, but shifts the emphasis from the cognitive to the affective plane. For her, being in God's likeness or image consists

³⁴ R. WHYBRAY, *Genesis*, p.43.

³⁵ Cf. GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, IV,1 – V,1.

³⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 34.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

essentially in the capacity to love and be loved³⁸. The shift is allegedly her unique contribution to the understanding of “image” and “likeness”. Humans differ from other beings because of their innate ability to live in a relationship of love; with God their Creator, but also with others. This, for Mother Teresa, is not simply a nice-sounding theory, but a call addressed to all human beings. To be truly human, a creature made in God’s image and likeness, is to love. After establishing the origin of the human being by asserting that he is created by God, another anthropologically relevant question is that of his constitutive parts or structure.

2.2.2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

It seems necessary to state, once more, that Mother Teresa never undertook any systematic study of the human being. Therefore, one may not expect a well-defined structure of man from her as though she were an anthropologist or a theologian in the strict sense. This in no way undermines her knowledge about human nature. In fact, a Mother Teresa scholar, Ines Angeli Murzaku, states that “from her early life [...] Mother Teresa learned universal truths about human nature and the practice of charity”³⁹. Just like she practised the charity she had learned from home all through her life, it can be conjectured that the childhood lessons about human nature also accompanied Mother Teresa throughout her life. Considering that to be the case, we shall attempt to piece out, from her personal life, her works, and her words, the notion of the human being. Her words and deeds, as evident in her own writings and writings about her, do indeed reveal the concept of man, a being composed of several elements. The subject of inquiry here is what the constitutive elements of the human being are according to Mother Teresa. We shall proceed by analysing passages in an anthology of her teaching⁴⁰ which make reference to the human being, then we shall examine her works, especially her approach to poverty.

³⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 91.

³⁹ I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 59.

⁴⁰ This anthology is titled: *Where There Is Love, There Is God*. It was compiled and edited by Fr Brian Kolodiejchuk and published in 2010. It is not exhaustive, but it is so far the best and most voluminous collection of her teachings.

2.2.2.1. Structure from Mother Teresa's terminology

A survey of Mother Teresa's writings reveals some six recurring anthropological terms a study of which gives an idea of her conception of an anthropological structure. The words are body, soul, heart, mind, spirit, will.

"Body", to begin with, is the physical and the most obvious dimension of the human being. What naturally spring to mind when a particular man is mentioned are bodily characteristics like size, height, colour, hands, feet. The term "body" seldom appears alone in Mother Teresa's writings. Rather, it is used often in conjunction with one or more other terms to represent the human being. On point is the statement that we belong to God body and soul⁴¹. "Body" and "soul" are polar extremes of the reality that the human being is. The expression "body and soul" is thus a merism that refers to the whole human being. The polarity is actually between materiality (represented by the body) and immateriality (represented by the soul). The material and the immaterial, nevertheless, form a unity in man. The Church puts it that the body is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul⁴². The merism "body and soul", thus, conveys the anthropological truth that the human being is constituted of material and immaterial elements. Understanding the human being as constituted of "body" and "soul" highlights both a similarity and a difference between Mother Teresa's concept of man and the concept of man in the Hindu society. The two agree that "body" and "soul" are components of the human person. However, they differ in the importance given to each of these components. In the Hindu conception of man, the essence of a human being is the soul inhabiting the body⁴³. The body is conceived as a kind of a temporary tent that houses man (the soul). But for Mother Teresa, "body" and "soul" taken together constitute the essence of man. Let us continue to consider what Mother Teresa says about the relationship between the "body" and the "soul".

While his bodily condition enables man to relate with other material beings, do works of God, and adopt prayer positions such as kneeling, standing, sitting; the quality

⁴¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 232.

⁴² Cf. CCC n. 364.

⁴³ Cf. Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, p. 36.

of the soul as “spiritus” enables man to go beyond corporeality and sensuality⁴⁴. Because of the inseparability of the human body and soul when a human being acts, Mother Teresa understood the body not as something bad as did the Manicheans⁴⁵, but as equally good as the soul. The teaching of Vatican II which Mother Teresa wholeheartedly embraced is that “Through his bodily condition he [man] sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason, man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day”⁴⁶. The body is as important as the soul which Mother Teresa uses in connection with the body. Equating the importance of the body with that of the soul makes Teresan anthropology stand in contradistinction to the Platonic system that only refers with aversion to the material dimension of man⁴⁷. This discussion arose from the consideration of “body” as an anthropological term Mother Teresa uses. Now we shall look at the term “soul”.

It follows from the above paragraph that “soul” is used to refer to a constituent of the human being. Another passage that confirms this usage reads: “The devil tempts us not so much to do us harm as to destroy God in us [...] He can do evil to so many but he is very anxious that in **my soul** [emphasis mine] he will destroy God”⁴⁸. The expression “my soul” does not carry the sense of something that merely belongs to me, but speaks of something that is a component of what I am. Moreover, the text suggests that the soul is the “seat” of the divine and human encounter – reason for which the devil seeks to destroy God therein.

The “soul”, in this sense, is used in a way synonymous to “spirit”, another term that Mother Teresa uses to talk about the reality of the human being. In addition to using

⁴⁴ Cf. M. TATAR, *Anthropological Bases on the Path to the Sanctification of Man*, “Studia Theologica Varsaviensia”, (2020) [115-119], p. 118.

⁴⁵ The Manicheans preached a dualist doctrine that the world is made up of two opposing and co-original forces or principles (one good and the other evil), and often they associated matter with evil. Cf. S. OLIVER, *Theodicy*, in: M. DAVIE et alii (ed.), *New Dictionary of Theology* [2nd Edition], Downers Grove 2016, p. 898.

⁴⁶ VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 14.

⁴⁷ Cf. M. TATAR, *Between Spirituality and Psychology: Friends or Enemies?*, in M. TATAR (ed.), *Kryzys w człowieku. Człowiek w kryzysie: Crisis in man, man in Crisis*, Sandomierz 2022, p. 259.

⁴⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 108.

the terminology “soul” to denote a human component, “soul” equally appears in contexts that suggest another meaning. That is the case in the statement that: “We religious are souls totally consecrated to Jesus”⁴⁹. This is different from saying, for instance, that “our souls are totally consecrated to Jesus” which could mean souls alone, excluding other components. Instead, to say that “we are souls” signifies that “soul” in that case refers not only to one component of man, but to the whole human being. This is one of the rare cases where Mother Teresa uses one element to refer to the whole human person. However, the two senses of “soul”: as a component of the human person and as the whole man, are seen in Mother Teresa’ writings.

Besides “body” and “soul”, Mother Teresa equally uses the term “heart” in relation to the human being. Instructing her sisters about prayer, she is recorded to have said: “You may be praying and heart and mind may be very far away – and you may not be praying at all. Where does your mind and heart go to? Where your treasure is, there is your heart. As soon as you get up in the morning, do your mind and your heart go first to Jesus? This is prayer – that you turn your mind and heart to God”⁵⁰. Just as she conjoins body and soul to refer to the human being in his totality, here too she uses another pair: “heart and mind”. She talks of the heart being far, of turning the heart to God, and asking where the heart went to. This signals that her usage of “heart” is not as in anatomy where it refers to a muscular organ that pumps blood through the circulatory system and has a fixed location in the body⁵¹; but symbolises an innermost aspect of man that enables him concentrate or pay attention to God in prayer. Thus understood, “heart” does not necessarily correspond with the material body organ that goes by that very name. It could as well be immaterial. Citing Mt 6:21 where Jesus says that a person’s heart will be where his treasure is, confirms that she is using “heart” in a biblical sense. In that case, “heart” means “the source of thoughts, feelings, decision, the centre of religious awareness, through which God is perceived, sought, heard,

⁴⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p.137.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁵¹ Cf. ANONYMOUS, *The New Penguin Dictionary of Biology*, M. Abercrombie et alii (ed.), 8th edition, Middlesex 1990, p. 263.

praised and loved”⁵². The heart is used in conjunction with the mind and in relation to prayer. Let us then examine what she means by “mind”.

Mother Teresa uses “mind” in a fashion that she understands it to be the centre of thought or an innermost aspect of man that enables him to grasp the truth or acquire knowledge. It is thus synonymous to reason and intellect. “To offer Him [God] our free will, our reason, our whole life in pure faith, so that He may think His thoughts in our minds, do His work through our hands, and love with our hearts”⁵³. The appeal to offer God our reason that he may think his thoughts in our minds elucidates the relationship between mind, reason and intellect.

In the preceding quote about mind, there is equally mention of free “will”. Mother Teresa understands “will” in a classical way as that element of the human person that enables him to take decisions. The “will” is so important because, for her, there is no sin until one wills it⁵⁴; and what each person becomes, a saint or a sinner, after the grace of God, depends upon the will⁵⁵. This echoes the scholastic doctor of the Church, St Thomas Aquinas, who opines that to be holy one simply needs to will it. The “will” is so unique because the human being has total control over it such that not even the devil can control a man’s will. Mother Teresa describes the fact that the devil cannot break one if one does not want it as “the wonderful part of God, given to each soul [...]”⁵⁶.

Examining her writings, one notices that in order to convey the idea of the whole man, Mother Teresa uses some anthropological terms in pairs or in triads like body-soul, heart-mind, will-reason, heart-body-soul. “Body” and “soul” go together and represent the materiality and immateriality or the physicality and spirituality of man. “Heart” and “mind” are paired up; while “heart” signifies the affective dimension of man, “mind” stands for the cognitive dimension. “Will” indicates the volitional dimension and is conjoin with “reason” which shows the cognitive aspect. These combinations do not seem to be arbitrary, since each shows polar dimensions of the human being. A puzzling

⁵² *The New Jerusalem Bible: Study Edition*, London 1994, p. 2086.

⁵³ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 202.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 108.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibidem* p. 259.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

one, however, is a triad of “heart-body-soul”. If “body and soul” already expresses the totality of the human person, why bring in “heart”? Though one may not say with certainty why “heart” is added to the “body-soul” pair, it is likely that the addition is simply for emphasis. Putting together all these combinations and the preceding considerations of each of the anthropological terms, it can be remarked that although the term “soul” sometimes refers to the whole human being, “man”, in Mother Teresa’s understanding, is a composite rather than a single element. He is made up of two main elements: one material or physical (the body) and the other immaterial or spiritual (the soul). The body itself is made up of parts like the head, the stomach, the legs; while the soul possesses faculties or powers. “Mind” and “will” are not components per se of the human being, but rather faculties of the soul. “Reason” is so akin to “mind” that the difference between the two, if any, is blur. Similarly, it is hard to say whether or not Mother Teresa was conscious of any distinction between “soul” and “spirit”, and more hard to say what such a distinction is, if she took them to be distinct. She advised sisters who might have been rude, harsh or unkind to the poor in these words: “You cannot say sorry directly so say sorry to each of them [the poor] in your mind, in your heart, in your spirit”⁵⁷. Mother Teresa in her characteristic fashion could as well have used “soul” in this passage. The fact that she used “spirit” instead gives one reason to think that the two terms were synonyms for her. Concerning the “heart”, it is clearly a body part, but Mother Teresa employs it in a rather figurative manner to refer to the affective dimension of man, that innermost aspect with which he can love and feel loved⁵⁸. The heart could thus be considered to be quasi-spiritual.

2.2.2.2. Structure from Mother Teresa’s approach to poverty

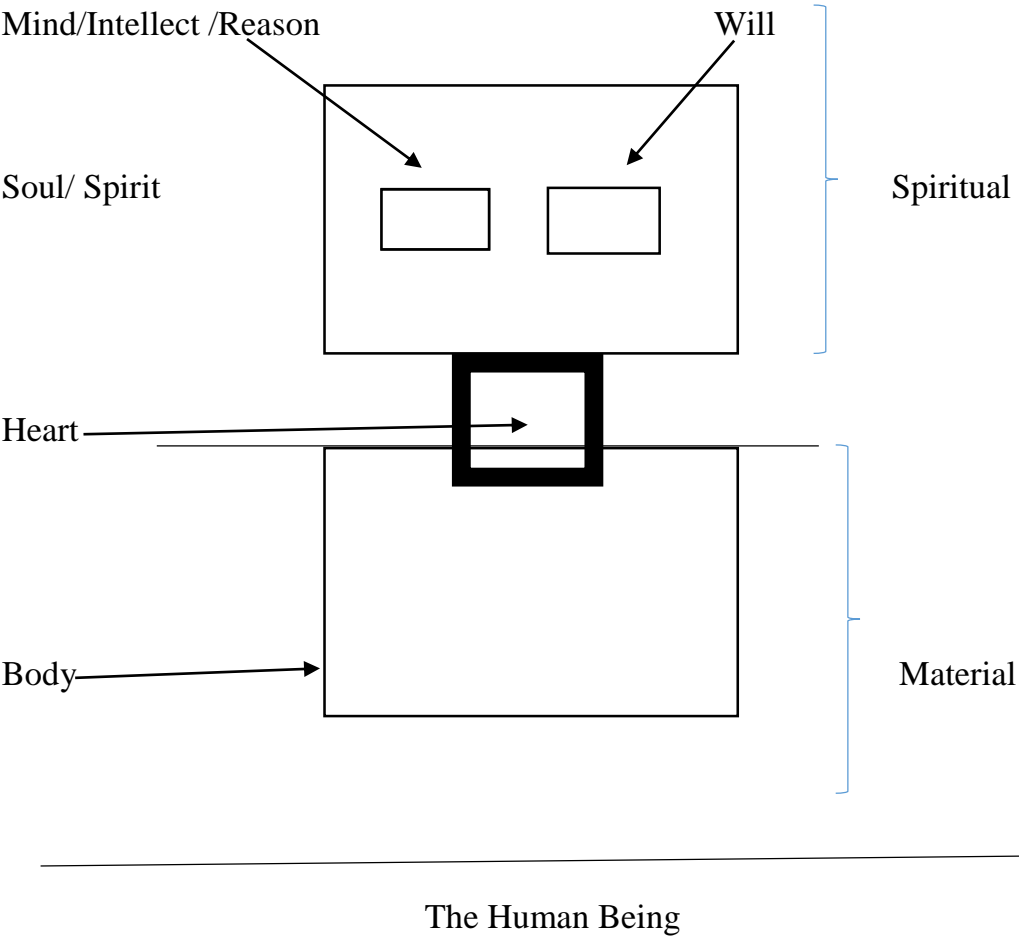
Turning now to Mother Teresa’s notion of poverty which will be discussed in detail later, it is evident that she had a holistic approach to the problem of poverty. She did not only attend to the material needs of the poor such as clothing, feeding, sheltering or providing medical assistance. In equal measure, the intellectual formation of homeless children or those whose parents were so poor that they could not sent them to

⁵⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 122.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 202.

school were taken care of; the affective needs of those abandoned by family and friends were taken care of; and the spiritual needs of those who were in no relation with God were met by teaching them about Jesus and the things of God. This understanding of poverty illustrates that Mother Teresa understood that man is a multidimensional being, and attended to those who suffered want at any of these dimensions: bodily, intellectual, affective and spiritual. The anthropological structure arising from her approach to poverty agrees perfectly with the one culled from her writings. The same is true if her personal life or that of the Missionaries of Charity is examined. She and her sisters belonged to God body and soul and so in taking care of themselves they neglected neither the body, the intellect, the soul nor the heart. This structure, according to Mother Teresa, is the same for all human beings since they have a common nature.

The Teresan anthropological structure may be represented diagrammatically as follows:



2.2.3. COMMON HUMAN NATURE

The importance of Mother Teresa's insistence on common human nature is better appreciated against the backdrop of the society in which she lived. We saw in the first chapter that the India of her days was a highly stratified society. Social divisions existed not only between Europeans and the natives. Indigenous people were also divided among themselves along other lines including ethnic, regional, caste, political, and religious. A Dalit and a Brahmin could not drink from the same well; and a Muslim Dalit could have very little to do with a Christian one, to cite only a few examples. Some of these stratifications found support in the conception of man enshrined in Hindu scriptures which seem to suggest that human beings are of different kinds depending on the body part of the primal man from which they originated⁵⁹. Finding herself in such a society, Mother Teresa was unimpressed by the privileges her European origin could afford her. Far from it, she adapted herself to the Indian culture, made it her own and immersed herself totally in it⁶⁰. This was partly due to her firm conviction that all human beings are the same and should be treated as such.

Her interaction with people was hence governed, among others, by the principle of human consubstantiality, namely that human beings all have a common nature. The principle rests securely on philosophical-theological foundations. It is consistent with metaphysics, that branch of philosophy that studies being qua being. Metaphysically speaking, nature is that which makes a thing what it is. A logical conclusion from this definition is that beings like humans, for instance, necessarily share a common nature. For if human beings were to have different natures, they would not all be humans. Species of beings differ from each other precisely on account of their nature. It is thus a metaphysical absurdity to talk of different kinds of human beings. Mother Teresa rejected such an absurdity in the insistence that human nature is the same for all. This position is theologically based on the doctrines of creation and redemption according to which human beings are all created equal by God⁶¹, created in his image and likeness

⁵⁹ Cf. *Rg Veda* 2.2.1.1, quoted in: S. RADHAKRISHNAN – C. MOORE (eds.), *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton 1957, p. 19.

⁶⁰ Cf. I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 106.

⁶¹ Cf. CCC, n. 27.

(Cf Gen. 1:27), created to love and be loved⁶², redeemed by Christ⁶³, and shall go back to God⁶⁴. Humanity's common origin in God is the reason for which Mother Teresa was wont to say: "God is our Father – and we are all His children – we are all brothers and sisters. Let there be no distinction of race or color or creed"⁶⁵. Many problems in the society could be solved if human beings realize that they are all brothers and sisters.

The doctrine of common human nature affected almost every aspect of Mother Teresa's life and of her Missionaries of Charity: candidates to join the Missionaries of Charity are admitted irrespective of the caste to which one belongs, charity is done to the poor of all backgrounds, the assistance and collaboration of anyone willing to help the poor is welcomed. Discrimination, negatively understood, did not exist in Mother's vocabulary. Someone has written that "the incarnation binding and bonding Christ to every human being is a theological synthesis of the life and mission of Mother Teresa, which surpassed boundaries, ethnicities, race, and differences of religion – because for her, every human was God's masterpiece, and in every human she saw Christ and an extension of the incarnation"⁶⁶. This is said in truth for whenever Mother Teresa met somebody, she saw a human being; not his religion, castes, or race. To a world prone to segregation and torn apart by the peripherals, Mother Teresa thus shows herself a true teacher with an important message: concentrate on the essentials. Focus on the essentials will lead humanity to the realization that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father, God. The conscious awareness of our common nature can lead to solidarity in solving the world's problems such as poverty, war, ecological and bioethical concerns. And this is urgent because man naturally is a being who lives with, and for, others.

2.2.4. A RELATIONAL BEING

Human relationality springs from the discovery of self and of others. The discovery of his own being is among the most vital and exciting experiences of the human being. Writing about the intuition of being, a Canadian-based Polish scholar

⁶² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 330.

⁶³ Cf. CCC, n. 1741.

⁶⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 342.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 330.

⁶⁶ I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 121.

notes: “After discovering our very existence, [...] we discover that this existence is only contingent or accidental. For the most part, it is a dramatic discovery. I did not give myself my being and, except in the event of committing suicide, I don’t have much control over the end of my life”⁶⁷. The realization that he exists, even though he does not have to, and that his life is not totally in his own control naturally leads the human being to the further enquiry of why he exists and who or what is in full control of his life?

From a theological point of view, according to Mother Teresa, these riddles are resolved in God who created us with the purpose to love and be loved⁶⁸. Her position alludes to the biblical teaching according to which God fashioned us in Christ to do the good works which he prepared in advance for us to do (Cf. Eph 2:10). The realization that human life originates in God comes along with the aspiration to go beyond oneself to dialogue and relate with the source of one’s being. That dialogue between man and his divine Creator has come to be known as prayer which, for Mother Teresa, makes our heart bigger until it is capable of containing the gift of God himself⁶⁹. Paul conceives God as the very matrix in which we live and move and exist (Cf. Acts 17:28). The implication is clear: God does not only create, but likewise holds in being what he creates. In this is to be found a justification for Mother Teresa’s complete trust in divine providence which was a hallmark of her life⁷⁰. In *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Moreover, discovering his own existence, the human being also comes to the consciousness that he is not alone. He is surrounded by other human beings beginning with his own family. Mother Teresa admitted that she was very close to her own family⁷¹. Relationships with the people around him are man’s felt need since he is not self-sufficient. One important way in which the longing for human relationships is made concrete is the establishment of what the ancient Greeks called the *polis* or city-state “that maximizes the opportunity for its members to achieve the greatest human functioning of which they are capable”⁷².

⁶⁷ A. JASTRZĘBSKI, *On Some Anthropological Foundations of Spirituality*, “Verbum Vitae” 37/2 (2020), [381-390], p. 383.

⁶⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa*, Florida 2019, p. 24.

⁷⁰ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, P.217.

⁷¹ Cf. I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 28.

⁷² Cf. A. PREUS, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Lanham 2007, p. 57.

The city-state is built on the conviction that people are more effective when they work together than singly. The social nature of man expresses itself in different ways around the world. Chinua Achebe brilliantly captures how it comes out in Africa in his celebrated novel, *Things Fall Apart*, as follows: “a man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in a moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Everyman can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so”⁷³. The mere fact of relating with one another, independent of any economic benefits, is seen from this African communitarian perspective as a good in itself. Whatever reason brings people together, the longing for human relationships cuts across time and cultures.

The various instructions Mother Teresa gave to the Missionaries of Charity exhibit how she was aligned with the universal feeling for human relationships. In them she insisted on the need for Missionaries of Charity to live in love with God, with each other, with the poor, and in fact with every other person⁷⁴. She was of the opinion that to be human is essentially to be relational. In this way, she links, perhaps unconsciously, what it means to be human with the Christian notion of “person” for as Colin Patterson says, relationality is one of the constitutive elements of the concept of person⁷⁵; and Jerzy Pałucki adds: “Understanding the person as relation had been an enormous novelty, which Christianity added to the wealth of human thought”⁷⁶. Proof of the recognition that human relationships operate at a vertical level (with God) and at a horizontal one (with fellow man) is shown in Mother Teresa’s works. An instance of that is the rhetorical question she posed to her sisters: “How can we love God and His poor – if we do not love each other with whom we live and break the Bread of Life daily together?”⁷⁷. Her understanding was that the relationship with the divine Creator necessarily spills over and influences relationship with fellow humans such that one’s relationships with people can be used to sound the depth of his relationship with God.

⁷³ C. ACHEBE, *Things Fall Apart*, Portsmouth 1958, p. 133.

⁷⁴Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 57.

⁷⁵ Cf. C. PATTERSON, *Chalcedonian Personalism: Rethinking the Human*, Berlin 2016, p. 99.

⁷⁶ J. PAŁUCKI, *The Concept of Person in the Church of the first Century*, “Personalism” 6(2004), P. 90.

⁷⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 57.

“Anyone who says ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, is a liar, since no one who fails to love the brother whom he can see can love God whom he has not seen” (1 Jn 4:20). The consciousness that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God characterized Mother Teresa’s relationship with people. This entailed respect for every person she encountered. As already shown, her life was however, dedicated to those who, for one reason or another, did not live according to their God-given dignity. Thanks to her, many felt loved and cared for.

Summarily, through the intuition of being, the human being discovers that his life depends on a being higher than him whom Mother Teresa as a Christian calls God. Man realizes, as well, that he is not alone in this world. This double discovery provokes man to seek relationships at both the vertical and horizontal levels. The innate tendency to transcend oneself and relate with others is the foundation of spirituality, for spirituality, generally speaking, is self-transcendence.

2.2.5. A TRANSCENDENT BEING

One obvious point in the preceding paragraph is that man is a transcendent being; and although the term “transcendence” may not be found in the writings of Mother Teresa, the idea of human transcendence is prevalent in almost every page she ever wrote and in all that she did. Evident in her works is the anthropological conviction that the human being is comprised of material as well as spiritual elements. Transcendence is accounted for by the spiritual aspect of man, and asserts that the reality of the human person goes beyond his physical dimensions. Man certainly needs food, clothing, shelter. But as Mother Teresa laboured to provide the poorest of the poor with these bodily needs, she was ever conscious that these alone were not enough to quench all the longings of the human heart. “There are many in the world,” she would say “who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty – it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There’s a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God”⁷⁸. The hunger for love, that urge to go out of one’s self in order to relate with the other is a manifestation

⁷⁸ M. RUSZALA, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, LLC 2017, p. 76.

of transcendence that is “present in the fundamental constitution of the human being”⁷⁹. When the other with whom one desires to relate is the Absolute Other (God), then transcendence takes the name of spirituality. This relationship with God then informs everything one does. One Missionary of Charity brothers who took care of 93,000 lepers had a problem with his superior and went to tell Mother Teresa that his vocation was to be with lepers and to serve them. When he had finished speaking, Mother responded: “Brother, you are making a very big mistake. Your vocation is not to work for the lepers, not even to love the lepers, your vocation is to belong to Jesus [who is God] with the conviction that nothing and nobody, not even the lepers, must separate you from the love of Christ. The work for the lepers is the means to put your undivided love for Christ in a living action”⁸⁰. This may sound exaggerated, but it is the exact reflection of how Mother Teresa understood the Christian life. For her, relationship with God is what should shape a Christian’s manner of relating with others and the world. Human behaviour, to be fully human, must therefore include the transcendental since it is inspired by God, the Transcendent One. The other aspect of human transcendence is that the spiritual constituent survives death. For this reason, Mother Teresa’s spirituality also made recourse to eschatology.

2.2.6. ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Mother Teresa understood the temporality of earthly life at a very early age when her father succumbed to death. It was quite a devastating experience, but she grew firm in the conviction, like most people do, that “our existence will not end with the death of our body”⁸¹. Hers was not a conviction borne simply of the instinct to live on and on, but one nourished by the Christian faith that “for those who die in Christ’s grace it [death] is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share his Resurrection”⁸². Mother Teresa’s faith in and understanding of the eschatological dimension of the human person are evident in her private as well as public discourses.

⁷⁹ A. JASTRZĘBSKI, *On Some Anthropological Foundations of Spirituality*, p. 382.

⁸⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 268.

⁸¹ A. JASTRZĘBSKI, *On Some Anthropological Foundations of Spirituality*, p. 383.

⁸² CCC, n. 1006.

There, topics such as death, judgment, heaven, purgatory, and hell are discussed, although superficially.

2.2.6.1. About death

A letter she wrote to her Cousin, File, at the death of her [Mother Teresa'] mother lends itself as a good starting point for the discussion of her eschatology. A short excerpt of it reads: "Mommy has returned home to the Lord. Now we have mommy to pray for us [...] You have loved Mommy [...] her sacrifices have helped me, and now she (Mommy) certainly will help more"⁸³. The death of her mother surely was painful, yet her words written at the time she got the sad news express neither frustration nor despair, but strong hope and certainty of life after death. Death is indeed inevitable, but then it does not have the last word. This is unlike the young Agnes Gonxha [the would-be Mother Teresa] who was greatly anguished at the death of her father who died when she was nine. According to Alpion, she struggled to make sense of what must have been incomprehensible and totally cruel to her⁸⁴. Mother Teresa, on the other hand, had matured not only in age, but also in the understanding of death. Death is no longer an incomprehensible tragedy, but a return to the Lord. And those who are in the presence of God are in heaven⁸⁵. The doctrine about man's return to God is rooted in Jesus' words to his apostles who were perturbed by the predictions of betrayal and of his departure: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house there are many places to leave in; otherwise I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you to myself, so that you may be with me where I am" (Jn 14:1-3). Confident in these words of Christ, Mother Teresa understood her mother's death as a going back to God.

2.2.6.2. The intercessory role of the dead

In Mother Teresa's letter is not only the conviction that death is a passage to another form of life, there is an added dimension: the intercessory role of the dead. St

⁸³ I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 51.

⁸⁴ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 161-162.

⁸⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 185.

Thomas Aquinas taught, in that regard, that the wayfarers (people on earth) can be helped by the prayers of the saints in heaven⁸⁶. Mother Teresa trusted that her mother who, while alive, had sacrificed a lot to help her could do even more in death. If her mother was already with God in heaven, then she was truly in a better position to plead to God on behalf of someone on earth. Doctrinally, this identifies with *Communio Sanctorum* which Pope Paul VI states as follows: “We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are attaining their purification, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and His saints is ever listening to our prayers”⁸⁷. The faithful live in communion with each other in such fashion that the elect in heaven are concerned about the people on earth and present their prayers to God who ever listens to them. Mother Teresa must have found confirmation of this conviction in the words of her own Patron saint, Thérèse of Lisieux, who had promised when she was near her death: “If God answers my requests, my heaven will be spent on earth up until the end of the world. Yes, I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth”⁸⁸. Since those who are said to listen to our prayers in communion with the merciful love of God are the blessed in heaven, Mother Teresa’s reliance on her mother’s intercession must have been based on the assumption that her mother was in heaven. Mother Teresa’s trust in the intercessory role of the saints also shows itself in her promise: “If I ever become a Saint – I will surely be one of ‘darkness.’ I will continually be absent from Heaven – to light the light of those in darkness on earth”⁸⁹. For a dead person to intercede for others, he/she must first be in heaven, it seems.

2.2.6.3. About Judgment

Given that the dead who intercede for people here on earth are those in heaven, it is reasonable to ask whether every dead person goes to heaven. The Church’s answer to that question is a categorical no; and that for some reason. Although God freely

⁸⁶ Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, II, q. 83, a.11., in: <https://ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa/summa?queryID=20025934&resultID=686>, [accessed 04/06/2022].

⁸⁷ PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter, *Solemni Hac Liturgia*, Rome 1968, n. 30.

⁸⁸ ST THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*, trans. J. Clarke, Trivandrum 2016, p. 263.

⁸⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 1.

created all men and women to share in his own blessed life⁹⁰, entrance into heaven depends, to some extent, on how each person uses his freedom, and God respects the freedom of his creatures. Jesus himself alludes to the possibility that some people will not succeed to enter [heaven] by the narrow gate (Cf. Lk 13:24).

This leads to another eschatological theme which Mother Teresa discusses: judgment. If “going home to God”⁹¹ is not guaranteed by the mere fact of dying, then there must be a decisive moment at which a person’s fate is determined. In Mother Teresa’s writings, this moment of judgment coincides with the hour of death. “At the hour of death when we all come face to face with God we are going to be judged on love: how much we have loved, not how much we have done but how much love we have put in our action”⁹². Of course, actions especially works of charity like welcoming the strangers, giving drink to the thirsty, visiting prisoners, are of vital importance to any disciple of Christ (Cf. Mt 25:31-46); and Mother Teresa does not want to undervalue them. However, the love with which these actions are carried out holds pride of place, and is the standard by which they are evaluated. Elsewhere she states similarly: “The poor are the hope of mankind, the poor are the hope for you and me to go to heaven for at the last judgment, we are going to be judged on that. ‘I was hungry and you gave me to eat, and I was naked and you clothed me’. Not only hungry for bread and rice but hungry for love, to be wanted, to be known that I’m somebody to you, to be called to it, to be called by name, to know my name, to have that deep compassion, hunger”⁹³. No new doctrine is invented here. Mother Teresa simply appropriates Christ’s teaching and applies it to the context where she found herself. Judgment that awaits each one of us at the time of death calls for preparation⁹⁴. And this is true for every human being whether he believes in Christ or not. Christians, however, have the advantage and, thus, greater responsibility because they have been taught⁹⁵.

⁹⁰ Cf. CCC n. 1.

⁹¹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 342.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 341.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 338.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 73.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 168.

2.2.6.4. About Hell

Concerning those who will not go to heaven, it is said that they will be in hell. Jesus describes this eternal separation from God in frightful figures as where “there will be weeping and grinding of teeth” (Lk 13:28). However, Mother Teresa urges Missionary Sisters of Charity: “For you, my Sisters, I do not want that you do not sin because of fear of hell or purgatory, but because you love Jesus. There is hell and there is purgatory, there is, but that is not the reason for not sinning”⁹⁶. Given dreadful presentations of hell, arguments have been raised, especially by new atheists, that the notion of hell is not compatible with that of an all-loving, all-good God⁹⁷. A good explanation for the apparent contradiction is contained in Mother Teresa’s statement that “hell was not in the original plan of God, but God was forced to create it. God who is merciful love, had not created hell until the angels disobeyed and became devils”⁹⁸. In that case, hell is the result of disobedience when a free creature goes against the will of God. If hell was not in God’s original plan, following Teresa’s explanation, then its existence does not jeopardize God’s attributes as all-loving and all-good. Problems of a logical and theological nature, however, arise when she writes that “God was forced to create it [hell]”. To begin with, the phrasing gives the impression that hell was created by God, and created as an afterthought. But hell cannot be thought to be a creature of God as are the heavens and the earth because, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hell is a state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed⁹⁹. Hell is not about where God places a creature, but about what a creature that God created free does to himself using his freedom. Also, the idea of God doing something as an afterthought goes against divine immutability¹⁰⁰. God is not fickle as are human beings. Moreover, if God is not merely a free being among many others, but freedom itself, then the idea of him being forced is unthinkable. On the other hand, if he was truly forced, then he is not God since God, properly understood, cannot be forced

⁹⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 121.

⁹⁷ Cf. F. TUREK, *Stealing from God: Why Atheist Need God to Make their Case*, Carol Stream 2015, p. 19.

⁹⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 263.

⁹⁹Cf. CCC. n. 1033.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. S. HOLMES, *God*, in: M. DAVIE et alii (ed.), *New Dictionary of Theology* [2nd Edition], Downers Grove 2016, p. 371.

by anyone, anything or any situation. What then can one say of Mother Teresa's utterances?

The idea that God was forced to create hell is clearly theologically inconsistent with the idea of God as already mentioned, but it will be unfair to accuse Mother Teresa of heresy or reductionism on that count. An attempt to understand her statement needs to take into consideration the fact that she was not a theologian qua theologian, but a simple religious woman instinct to the core with the desire to uphold and teach what the Church teaches¹⁰¹. With that in mind, it can be reasonably and safely stated that, although she used wrong phraseology, she did not intend to teach anything contrary to the Church about the nature of hell or to say that God acted under duress. Her canonization on 4th September 2016 which took place statutorily after a thorough scrutiny of her life, words, and actions, is a further prove that, although she might have expressed herself poorly, she did not intend to teach a doctrine contrary to the Church, since the Church does not canonise heretics.

Instead of letting the subject of God's freedom that is tangential to the question under consideration distract us, we should rather concentrate on Mother Teresa's message: hell is the result of a creature's freedom turned against God. This position is corroborated even by non-Catholic authors. A member of an Evangelical Charismatic church, Justin Brierley, comes to the following conclusion after examining the issue of hell: "So hell isn't God's punishment for not believing the right things; it's a self-imposed exile and final end for those who simply don't want God"¹⁰². Hell is possible because of the misuse of freedom. The creatures mentioned in the cited text from Mother Teresa are angels who became devils, but what is said of them applies as well to humans who like angels are also free beings. Whether one qualifies for hell or not depends on the exercise of his freedom. C.S. Lewis aptly articulates the idea that hell is a result of choice in the following lines: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell.

¹⁰¹ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 75.

¹⁰² J. BRIERLEY, *Unbelievable?*, p. 185.

But no soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened”¹⁰³. The point that no soul that constantly desires joy will ever miss it was of more interest to Mother Teresa; and it was in that light that she understood her mission as bringing the light of God’s love to those who were living in darkness¹⁰⁴, especially the darkness of sin. Hell is mentioned as an unfortunate, but realistic acknowledgment of the fate of those who turn their backs completely to God.

2.2.6.5. About Purgatory

Mother Teresa believed the Catholic doctrine of faith that those who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified are not damned. Such people are assured of eternal salvation, but since they have not yet achieved the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven, they undergo purification after death. This final preparation of the elect is called purgatory¹⁰⁵. Mother Teresa further explains that purgatory is not a condition in which the dead involuntarily find themselves. She says of those who go to purgatory: “I believe that they are happy to go there to become spotlessly clean”¹⁰⁶. In this sentence is embedded the theological opinion that those who go to purgatory are not sent there by God, but go on their own accord because they realize that they are not yet fit for God. It is only when they have been made spotlessly clean in the cleansing fire (Cf. 1Cor 3:15) that they proceed to heaven. The dead, therefore, are not passive in the determination of their fate, but play an active role based on an honest evaluation of their own life on earth. This emphasizes the idea of human freedom and of a God who respects man’s freedom to determine his final destiny.

As a way of conclusion, Mother Teresa upholds the Christian doctrine that there is eternal life after death. People will spend their eternity either with God in heaven or in hell. There is judgment at which the fate of individuals will be determined, but there is equally purgatory to purify those souls that die in the friendship of God but are not yet pure enough for heaven. According to the eschatology which Mother Teresa expounds, the state or quality of life after death depends on life on earth. Mother

¹⁰³ C.S. LEWIS, *The Great Divorce*, London 1946, p. 66-67.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 1

¹⁰⁵ Cf. CCC, n. 1030.

¹⁰⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 73.

Teresa's eschatology with its ideas of dying once and for all, heaven, hell, purgatory, again sets her notion of the human person apart from the Hindu concept of man according to which a human being continues in a cycle of reincarnation until he becomes holy with good enough karma to escape the wheel of rebirth and enter the state of eternal bliss¹⁰⁷. This, of course, has consequences in the way one lives his/her life and relate with others. By presenting human life on earth as a preparation for life hereafter, Christian eschatology serves an important function in Mother Teresa's spirituality. Her anthropology and spirituality are also influenced by the reality of original sin and its effects on humanity.

2.3. THE FALL – ORIGINAL SIN

“The Fall” and its kindred concept of “Original Sin” in Christian theology are crucial to anthropology in that they help “explain” the condition of “fallenness” in which the human being finds himself. Created in God's own “image and likeness” to love and live in communion with his Creator and fellow man, the human being discovers within himself obstacles and often falls short of living up to this lofty vocation. Theology refers to this act of falling short of the target as sin. Knowledge of this human condition occasioned St Paul's declaration that all have sinned and lack God's glory (Cf. Rom. 3:23). One finds a similar idea in Fr McBrien's book on Catholicism: “Few of us, if any, doubt the reality of evil, in its individual, social, historical, natural, and cosmic dimensions”¹⁰⁸. True indeed, sin and its effects are present everywhere in the world, and every generation has its own experience of it. Mother Teresa lived with the consciousness of sin within and around herself. “She often spoke of ‘uncharitableness,’ referring mainly to the sins of the tongue: detraction and calumny, or any form of gossip. These sins pained her deeply”¹⁰⁹. These are, of course, only some of the many sins Mother was aware of. The reality and prevalence of sin put theology as a whole and

¹⁰⁷ Cf. W. ATKINSON, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁸ R. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, New York 1994, p. 185.

¹⁰⁹ B. KOLODIJCHUK, in MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 64.

anthropology in particular in something of a conundrum: “How could sin invade and pervade the world that God made good?”¹¹⁰.

2.3.1. ACCOUNTING FOR THE ENIGMA

Drawing from Gen. 2:8-3:24 and other biblical passages (Rom. 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:21-23), the concept of “the fall” has been invoked to show “how sin, once admitted into the world, spreads everywhere, bringing death and destruction in its wake”¹¹¹. Beginning with early Christian writers like St Augustine, the idea has developed into the doctrine of “Original Sin” which is a way of naming and accounting for the reality of sin. This doctrine defines Original Sin as “the state or condition in which, because of the sin of Adam and Eve, all human persons are born”¹¹². This definition, however, does not indicate the content or essence of this state of being. The council of Trent describes it in terms of a deprivation of the original righteousness (justice) and holiness¹¹³. The deprivation of man of the original righteousness leaves him pruned to sin. Mother Teresa understood sin along these same lines as the result of the fall. According to her: “Disobedience was the first sin; right there in front of God, Lucifer – the most beautiful angel – refused to submit, refused to obey, not in chastity or anything else, but he said, ‘I will not serve’. When he was cast out of heaven, he wanted more companions, so he went to Adam and Eve – God had told them, ‘you can eat from all the trees [...]’. Then God said such a small thing, ‘Don’t eat from this one tree.’ [...] What happened was a continuation of that same first sin – they refused to obey and ate that fruit. When we disobey, it is a continuation of that same first sin – that first sin makes us sinners; because of that first one, the inclination [to sin] is there. I must face that in myself”¹¹⁴. This narrative is unique in the link it makes between the fall of Adam and Eve and that of Lucifer. Adam and Eve (whom Mother Teresa calls our first parents) fell by eating of the forbidden tree, but their fall is a continuation or a result of the prior fall of Lucifer. In them Lucifer finds companions in the rebellion he had launched against God. Hence,

¹¹⁰ S. MARGUERITE, *The Mystery of Original Sin: We don’t Know Why God Permitted the Fall, but We Know all too well the Evil and Sin that still Plagues Us*, “Christianity Today” 57(2013), [38-41], p. 40.

¹¹¹ R. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, p. 186.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 184.

¹¹³ Cf. R. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, p. 189.

¹¹⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 256-275.

the sense in which their sin is original is not that it was the first sin ever committed, but that they were the first humans to sin. Since they are the parents of humanity, every human being suffers the effects of their sin.

2.3.2. CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL

In her own words about why the experience of sin is common and prevalent among human beings created good and for a good purpose, Mother Teresa is of the opinion that human sinfulness is the effect of Original Sin. This comes out clearly in the statement that “Sin is an evil not created by God but created by the fruit of disobedience”¹¹⁵. Disobedience here refers primarily to that of Adam and Eve who, against divine instruction, ate the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden (Cf. Gen. 3:1ff). The disobedience of Adam and Eve wrought for humanity that issues from them both bodily and spiritual death such that we are each born a sinner and with the inclination to sin¹¹⁶.

In addition to the disintegration of the individual’s life, Original Sin also causes disintegration at the social level. The social consequence of the fall began to show its ugly head when Adam and Eve who had hitherto lived in harmony with one another started a blame-game at the coming of Yahweh God, and reached heinous proportions in Cain who killed his own brother out of jealousy and anger (Cf. Gen. 3:8-13; 4:1-16). Mother Teresa tells how an individual gets involved in sin: “When I choose evil, I sin. That’s where my will comes in. When I seek something for myself at the cost of everything else, I deliberately choose sin”¹¹⁷.

Social disintegration occurs when the human society or community is that thing at the cost of which I seek something for myself. And it becomes worse if everyone in the community is seeking their selfish interest at the expense of the common good. As a counter to the self-seeking that spoils social life and community living, Mother Teresa

¹¹⁵ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 72.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 275.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

used to advise Missionaries of Charity to take their eyes away from their interest, from their rights, from their privileges and from their ambitions¹¹⁸.

All told, Mother Teresa does not give an explanation as such of how it is that every human being is affected, without personal decision, by the sin of our first parents. She simply states that as a consequence of that sin, we are born sinners and with the inclination to sin. The theological fact that we are born with the inclination to sin is significant for both Christian anthropology and spirituality. Christian life which consists essentially in doing the will of God after the example of Christ in the Holy Spirit is a struggle because of that inborn inclination. The dynamics of the struggle between good and evil and the frailty of human nature call for constant vigilance and recourse to the sacraments as we shall see in the chapter about Mother Teresa's spirituality. Unlike Adam who fell, Christ, whom St Paul calls the second Adam, is the model for humanity since he obeyed his Father to the uttermost. But this is not obvious to everyone.

It seems necessary to note, in passing, that this Christian account of evil is quite different from that which permeate India where Mother Teresa lived and worked for most of her life. The concept of Original Sin is absent in the Hindu thought. Evil originates, according to Hindu philosophy, in each person when he allows himself to be pushed and pulled by the forces of the *prakriti*¹¹⁹ such that each of the three forces that operates in each human being pulls in its own direction without reference to the others¹²⁰. Evil is thus a result of the disharmony between tendencies within man. This view of evil also holds that man can redeem himself through practices such as the yoga. Mother Teresa did not allow herself to be influenced by this pervasive understanding of

¹¹⁸Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Do Something Beautiful for God*, p. 213.

¹¹⁹ An understanding of the concept and operations of *prakriti* are important for an understanding of the origin of evil in Hindu philosophy. *Prakriti* refers to the universe animated by the Supreme Spirit – the *Purushottama*. The *prakriti* comprises three *gunas*, operating principles or tendencies: *sattva* which has to do with what is light, that which goes up and is bright, and what enlightens; *rajas* which has to do with what moves or makes, is dynamic, passionate, pleasing, misleading, repelling and repulsive; and *tamas* that refers to what is dark, dull, heavy, stubborn and the stupid. The *prakriti* makes three basic movements: the upward movement which the *sattva* is responsible for; the sideward movement caused by the *rajas*; and the downward movement accounted for by the *tamas*. A harmonious combination of these three form the *prakritic* movement that is orbital. This gives rise to order which is expected to exist normally in the world. What exists in the universe also exists in an individual human being who is a microcosm of the universe. A smooth and harmonious orbital movement brings order and tranquillity in human existence. Evil is hence understood as the destabilization of this order. For a detailed reading, Cf. F. D'SA, *Trinitarian Evil – The Bhagavadgita's Understanding of Evil*, "Dialogue & Alliance" 8(1994), p. 20-24.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 21.

evil. She held firm to the Christian story which asserts Christ as the true Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

2.4. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE/LIKENESS

Early on in this chapter, it was demonstrated that “Image”/ “likeness” is one of the motifs that runs through Mother Teresa’s pronouncements about the human person. She refers to the human being in several instances as the “image” or “likeness” of God. This is a theme borrowed from biblical anthropology according to which Adam (man) is made in God’s own image and likeness as the only creature with such grandeur. What is meant by this assertion is that Adam mirrors or pictures what God is like. As such, he occupies a unique and special place in the cosmos. The Gospel according to Luke indeed calls him the “son of God” (3:38). Despite his grandeur, Adam was only a prefiguration of the One who was to come (Cf. Rom. 5:14). As such, he does not exhaust what it means to be the image of God. “Only in Christ, in whom divine and human natures are united, do we find One who is of one substance with the Father”¹²¹. The fall actually proves how imperfect Adam was as a representation of God. By choosing instead to listen to the snake, he failed to image God his Creator. This all the more heightens the need for someone other than Adam who would perfectly reveal to humanity what it means to be the image of God. St Paul identifies the perfect representation of the Father in the uncreated Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom he calls the second or last Adam (Cf. 1 Cor15: 45) and the “image of the unseen God” (Col. 1:15), and develops an elaborate Christological interpretation of image of God. Accordingly, Christ is the one who restores, by his obedience, the image of God broken by Adam’s disobedience (Cf. Rom. 5:17-18). Mother Teresa understood, along these Pauline lines, that it is to Christ that man must look in order to better appreciate his identity as the image of God. Her spirituality is therefore Christocentric in nature. It takes into consideration that Christ is both God and man as the Church professes in her creed.

¹²¹ A. LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, New York 2007, p. xiii.

2.4.1. JESUS CHRIST: THE REVELATION OF GOD

That Jesus reveals God is not something made up or invented by his followers after his death. Jesus' own response to Philip when the latter asked him to "show us the Father" proves his self-consciousness as the revelation of God. "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, 'show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (Jn 14:4-10). Jesus was aware that he is the one whom to have seen is to have seen the Father. This claim is crucial for anthropology because if it is true, then Jesus is the one to whom man must look in order to know what God is like. Mother Teresa's take on Jesus' identity, of course, is the concern here. She rarely says that Jesus is God, but speaks and acts in ways that point to her belief in Jesus' divine identity. She said: "Nobody has seen God, except Jesus. So nobody can make a picture of God"¹²². This statement, which is in essence a paraphrase of Johannine Christology, shows belief in Jesus' unique ability to reveal God. He makes God known for no other reason other than that he himself is God. Mother Teresa' faith in Jesus as God is demonstrated in several other instances as the points that follow attempt to show.

2.4.1.1. Argument from total dependence on Jesus

Dependence on Jesus characterised Mother Teresa's life from childhood till death. For instance, to join a missionary order in the 1920s entailed the prospect of a lifetime of total separation from one's family members, friends, and homeland. The would-be Mother Teresa was quite aware of this; yet in 1928, she left home and joined a missionary order in order to "go out and give the life of Christ to the people"¹²³. Having become a missionary, she was prepared to do more for Jesus. Abandoning her religious congregation, the Loreto Sisters, to minister to the poorest of the poor in the streets was to choose loneliness, ignominy and uncertainty; Mother Teresa did that all the same for the lone reason that Jesus wanted it¹²⁴. The question necessarily imposes itself: who is this Jesus? The only answer that makes sense is that Mother Teresa understood Jesus to

¹²² MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 314.

¹²³ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 48.

be God, and the Lord of her life. That is the reason she was ready to risk all that the will of Jesus may be done in and through her life.

Furthermore, she once told a group of reporters that her life would be reduced to mere nothing if Jesus were to be removed from it¹²⁵. She never said these or similar strong words of anyone, not even of her mother whom she and her siblings affectionately called *Nane Loke*¹²⁶, and who meant almost everything to them especially when their father died¹²⁷. Her mother was a very loving and supportive mother, yet Teresa knew she could do without her. For Mother Teresa to have made the bold claim that her life would be nothing without Jesus implies that Jesus, for her, was more than a mere human being. She could not make such a claim except for the firm conviction that Jesus is God. Jesus reveals God not because he merely looks like God, but because he himself is God. Jesus does not only sustain life. As God, he also has the power to forgive sins.

2.4.1.2. Argument from the power to forgive sins

The argument propounded in this section is that Mother Teresa “gave” her sins to Jesus to be forgiven because she believed that Jesus is God. There exists biblical evidence that the power to forgive sins belongs primarily to God. The *locus classicus* is Lk 5:20-21 where the scribes and Pharisees are astonished at Jesus’ authoritative declaration to the paralytic that his sins are forgiven him. Who is Jesus to talk this way? They consider his words blasphemous precisely because only God can forgive sins, and he is not God as far as they know.

The assertion that God alone can forgive sins notwithstanding, there is also a sense in which the power to forgive sins belongs to humans. For this reason, a person who does wrong to another and realizes his fault normally moves up to the one he has wronged and asks for forgiveness; and the offended party is expected to forgive: “Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either” (Mt 6:14-

¹²⁵ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. xii.

¹²⁶ *Nane Loke*, is Albanian for “mother of my soul”

¹²⁷ Cf. I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, 38-39.

15). It seems, however, that there are both quantitative and qualitative differences between the forgiveness offered by God and that offered by man.

Quantitatively, a human being can forgive only those sins committed/omitted against him. “X”, for example, can only forgive “Y” for something “Y” did against him. “X” is powerless to forgive “Y” for the sin “Y” committed against “Z”. As such, no man can forgive all the sins of another since a human being is liable to sin against several people. Qualitatively, human forgiveness can repay only the damage sin causes at a horizontal or social level; that is, it brings harmony between two people or groups of people. But more than causing disharmony between people, sin also destroys the life of grace in the one who sins thereby severing the relationship between him and God. Therefore, sin also means guilt towards God¹²⁸. Human forgiveness cannot repay the damage done at this vertical level of man’s relationship with God. It is particularly at this qualitatively superior level of forgiveness that God is said to be the only one that can forgive sins. After all these clarifying distinctions, let us return to Mother Teresa.

She concludes a meditation she wrote on the question of Jesus’ identity with these lines: “Jesus, I love with my whole heart, with my whole being – I have given him all even my sins and he has espoused me to himself in tenderness and love. Now and for life I am the spouse of my crucified Spouse”¹²⁹. Among other things, she says clearly that she has given Jesus all even her sins. Mother Teresa could not have committed these sins against Jesus as a human being sins against another for the obvious reason that Jesus lived almost two thousand years before her. And if a human being can forgive only sins committed against him, then Mother Teresa’s giving of her sins to Jesus shows that Jesus to her was more than a mere human being. Moreover, Mother Teresa could not have been looking for a restoration of mere cordiality between herself and Jesus when she gave him her sins, but rather the restoration of that inner harmony that only God can bring. And if, despite her full knowledge that only God can restore that inner harmony, she turned to Jesus for it, then there can be no other conclusion apart from that she found in Jesus a revelation of God.

¹²⁸ Cf. G. KITTLE – G. FRIEDRICH (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. Bromiley, [Abridged in one volume], Exeter 1985, p. 46.

¹²⁹ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 191-192.

2.4.1.3. A cry from the Cross

Mother Teresa's belief in Jesus' revelatory nature is made known in no small way by her understanding of Jesus' cry of thirst. The words: "I am thirsty" (Jn 21:28) which Jesus yelled as he died on the Cross were underscored during the mystical encounter Mother Teresa had on her way to Darjeeling for an annual retreat. The event convinced her that the words were not simply about Jesus' human thirst for water or some other liquid, but were indeed a revelation of God's yearning to draw humanity to himself¹³⁰. It was a thirst that water alone could not quench. God's thirst demands love. If the "I am thirsty" of Jesus expresses God's yearning it is for no other reason than that Jesus who uttered those words is himself God. Christology agrees with this conclusion as these words of J. Ratzinger affirm: "Developed Christological dogma acknowledges that the radical Christship of Jesus presupposes the Sonship and that the Sonship includes the Godship"¹³¹. If Christ the Son dying on the Cross is God, then Mother Teresa was right to perceive in that cry from the Cross the hunger of God himself. For her, Jesus' thirst alludes to the God who went out in search of Adam after the fall: "where are you?" (Gen. 3:8). The God Jesus reveals is a God who is not aloof from the human situation, but actively involved with the aim of bringing man back to himself. Spirituality becomes possible when this divine yearning encounters man's desire to relate with the Absolute Other. It was in order to make this encounter feasible that Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity with the specific aim of satiating that thirst by serving the poorest of the poor¹³². She would tell her sisters: "My very dear children, let us love Jesus with our whole heart and soul. Let us bring him many souls [...]"¹³³. Their activities were motivated by this belief that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Many instances in Mother Teresa's life demonstrate this conviction. Thus she and her disciples came to see the world through "Christ-focused spectacles"¹³⁴.

¹³⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 70.

¹³¹ J. RATZINGER, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. Foster – J. Miller, San Francisco 2004, p. 211.

¹³² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 41.

¹³³ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 143.

¹³⁴ J. BRIERLEY, *Unbelievable?*, p. 200.

2.4.1.4. Jesus' infinity and power to create

Mother Teresa's conviction about Jesus' ability to create and to act infinitely is brought out in an encounter with Malcolm Muggeridge, the journalist who popularized in the West the work Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity were doing in Calcutta. Muggeridge was not himself a Christian at the time he first met the woman who would become his heroine. The relationship between him and Mother Teresa grew, but he was still troubled by intellectual doubts relating to the Church and the Eucharist. Once, Mother told him regarding his doubts: "I am sure you will understand beautifully everything – if only you would become a little child in God's hands [...] The personal love Christ has for you is infinite – the small difficulty you have regarding the Church is finite. Overcome the finite with the infinite. Christ has created you because he wanted you"¹³⁵. Articulated here is the belief that the truths of Christianity can better be appreciated only from within the Church. St Anselm of Canterbury shows a similar conviction in his famous adage: "I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand"¹³⁶. Mother Teresa was inviting Muggeridge to believe (come to the Church) in order that he may understand.

What is of more interest to us, however, are two of her pronouncement about Jesus – that he loves infinitely and that he created. Each of these can be expressed in a syllogistic form to show her comprehension of Jesus. First, only God, the Infinite One, can love infinitely. Jesus loves Muggeridge infinitely. It follows naturally that Jesus must then be God. And Mother Teresa meant exactly that when she said those words. She was making a contrast between the infinite love of Jesus and the finite difficulty Muggeridge had. Muggeridge's difficulty could only be finite since he as human was finite. This demonstrates her knowledge of infinity as a divine attribute. Secondly, she said that Christ (Jesus) had created Muggeridge because he wanted him. God, according to Christian theology, is the only Creator. If only God can create, and Christ creates, then Christ is definitely God. One may object the assertion that Jesus created Muggeridge on the grounds that the Creator is God the Father, whereas Jesus is the Son.

¹³⁵ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 255.

¹³⁶ ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, *Proslogion* 1, in: B. DAVIES (ed.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford 1998, p. 87.

Contrarily, it must be noted that even though the three persons of the Trinity are really distinct from one another¹³⁷, they are inseparable¹³⁸; and when creation is attributed to the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit are not excluded from the creative act¹³⁹. The evangelist John affirms the role of Jesus in creation when he says: “Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him” (Jn1:2-3). God creates in the oneness of his nature. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* crowns it as follows: “Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do”¹⁴⁰. Mother Teresa rightly saw Jesus not purely as a good moral teacher and model, but God himself. She acknowledged lucidly in her acceptance speech of the Nobel Prize that Jesus is God¹⁴¹. As such, Jesus is in the position to show man what it means to be human.

2.4.2. CHRIST AS A TRUE MAN

Mother Teresa’s faith in Jesus as the God-made-man who came to reveal God is evident in her writings¹⁴². The numerous biblical passages she cites in reference to Jesus show how Scripture-based is the faith she has in him. Her teachings about Jesus’ humanity stand out in talks about Jesus’ obedience to the Father, his likeness to us, and about Mary. In fact, Mother Teresa points Jesus to her sisters as a perfect model of obedience because, despite his equality with God, he chose to submit, to obey, and be born of Mary¹⁴³. Though incidental, Jesus’ humanity is nevertheless affirmed: he was born of a woman. Thus born, he is like all humans. In Mother Teresa’s own words: “The Creator chose to become a creature, one with us, like us, to be dependent on others, to need food to eat, clothes to wear, drink to quench His thirst, to need rest, to be tired like us [...]”¹⁴⁴. Food, clothes, drink and rest are needs every human being, without

¹³⁷ Cf. CCC, n. 245.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, n. 267.

¹³⁹ The practice by which certain divine names, qualities or operations are attributed to one of the Persons of the Trinity, not, however, to the exclusion of the others, but in preference to the others, is technically referred to in theology as “appropriation”. Following appropriation, the Father is the Creator, the Son is the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier.

¹⁴⁰ CCC, n. 267.

¹⁴¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹⁴² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 272.

¹⁴³ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 35.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

exception, has. Mother Teresa's insistence that Jesus had these very needs goes to show that he really was a true man. At the same time, Mother Teresa is conscious that Jesus did not lose his divinity by becoming man. While stressing his humanity, she maintains that Jesus is the Creator that became the creature. And while stressing his likeness to us, she maintains that he is without sin¹⁴⁵. That Jesus who is truly man is without sin, a truth borrowed from Hebrews 4:15, denies that sin is in the essence of man.

Besides arguments that derive from Jesus himself, Jesus' humanity can also be demonstrated from Mother Teresa's belief about Mary. She holds that Our Lady (Mary) can teach humanity to find Jesus¹⁴⁶ the Lord by her example of humility, openness to the will of God and silence¹⁴⁷. Above all, Mother Teresa believes that Mary is capable of leading mankind to Jesus because she is Jesus' own mother¹⁴⁸. The intimacy of the mother-child relationship between Mary and her son puts her in the position of Knowing Jesus better than any other human being. One of the possible inferences from all this is that Jesus is human since he has a human parent.

Having considered Jesus' divinity and his humanity, a comprehensive understanding of Jesus according to Mother Teresa is that he is both God and man. In that way, "he is the reflection of God's glory and bears the impress of God's own being" (Heb.1:3), and at the same time, he serves the anthropological role of revealing man's true nature since he is without any stain of sin. "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh [Jesus] that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling"¹⁴⁹. Since Christ, true God and true man, makes known to man what it really means to be human, Mother Teresa presents

¹⁴⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 35.

¹⁴⁹ VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

him as a model humanity should follow in the strive for holiness. She bids her follows to “listen prayerfully in deep faith to His teachings and strive to do what He says”¹⁵⁰.

2.4.3. FOLLOWING CHRIST AS THE PATH TO HOLINESS

As previously seen, Mother Teresa gives a kind of ontological definition or description of the human being by appealing to man’s metaphysical properties. At the same time there are frequent references to herself as an instrument¹⁵¹ or a pencil in God’s hand¹⁵². These references connote another understanding of the human person that is rather functional. This is born of the realization that God sometimes operates through human instrumentality to realize his purposes. Whatever is done by such human instrument is therefore done principally by God. And God wants to make use of everyone he created, for the divine action of creation is purposive. Owing to this, Mother Teresa regarded her work of bringing souls to God and God to souls as essentially God’s work¹⁵³, and would not take any credit for it. This line of reasoning is not devoid of anthropological import. It means that for man to fully realize his purpose he must allow himself to be made use of by God. That is the kernel of these words of Mother Teresa to her sisters: “Jesus cannot walk in the street of Calcutta and in the streets of the world now – so what [does] He do? – Through me He walks and touches the poor and shows the world His Fathers love and purity. Today God loves the world so much by sending us. He sent you through Mother [Teresa] wherever you have to go. To do what? – To radiate the purity of God’s love”¹⁵⁴. God shows his love and concern to the world not so much through miraculous action as by the ordinary works of those who allow themselves to be used by him. When Jesus himself walked the surface of the earth, people saw God at work in him. The Evangelist Mark is keen to note the exclamation of the Centurion when Jesus breathed his last on the Cross: “In truth this man was the Son of God” (15:39). Jesus therefore serves as the example for each human person to follow that he may be what he was meant to be by God.

¹⁵⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 272.

¹⁵¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 153.

¹⁵² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 257.

¹⁵³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 210.

In obedience to the Father's will, Jesus humbled himself and assumed the human condition, and being like all men are, he was humbler yet (Cf. Phil 2:6-7). During his earthly life, he went about doing good – preaching the good news, curing the sick, feeding the hungry, and he bid anyone who would be his disciple to come after him (Cf. Mt16:24). Jesus' call, as Mother Teresa understood it, was a call “to become more Christlike, ‘molded into His image until He is form in us’”¹⁵⁵. Only he in whom Christ has been fully formed can be said to have reached the heights of human maturity. Being human, for Mother Teresa, therefore, consists in doing what Christ did and living the kind of life he lived. Imitation of Christ in the way of obedience, humility and passion is therefore an indispensable path in the journey to human maturity and holiness. This entails suffering since Christ himself suffered and died on the Cross on account of his work. Mother Teresa learned to follow Christ from her childhood, and when she grew up, she saw her mission as following Christ in his preferential love for the disadvantaged¹⁵⁶, and encouraged others to do so. In short, the creation of each human being is intentional. For the human person to achieve the purpose for which he was created, he needs to allow himself to be used by God; this requires that man follows the example of Jesus who did perfectly the will of his Father. This is the way that leads to the growth of the human person and holiness.

2.4.4. RECOGNIZING CHRIST IN ONE'S NEIGHBOUR

It must certainly be admitted that recognizing Christ in one's neighbour is the highpoint of Mother Teresa's anthropology. Its origins may be traced to Scriptural passages that identify Christ with his people especially the lowly, the poor, the marginalized and the persecuted. *Acts of the Apostles* reports a mystical encounter which Saul, a persecutor of the followers of the way¹⁵⁷, had on the road to Damascus in which he heard a heavenly voice asking why he was persecuting him. Inquiring who it was, Saul was told: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (9:1-9). Evidently, there is a sense in which Jesus is in those who follow him since doing something to his disciple is

¹⁵⁵ I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁷ “The way” refers to the way of life characteristic of the Christian community. The term was used by extension to the community itself.

doing it to Jesus himself. When Saul had converted and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, he referred to the Church as the body of Christ (Cf. Col. 1:24). He must have gotten this insight from his experience on the way to Damascus. Pope Pius XII writes in a letter in which he explains and develops this doctrine that “The doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, was first taught us by the Redeemer Himself”¹⁵⁸. Assimilation of this doctrine is patent in Mother Teresa’s works, and she recognized Christ not only in the community of believers, but in each individual human being. Every human person is a beautiful image of God¹⁵⁹.

To notionally assent to the proposition that “man is an image of God”, and to really perceive and treat him as such are two different things. Mother Teresa distinguished herself in that she had the ability to see an image of God in every human being she encountered whether a Christian, a Hindu or Muslim. But since the image of God par excellence is Christ, every human being, according to her, is Christ in a certain sense. The inspiration came in particular from Jesus’ discourse in the Gospel according to Matthew about the Last Judgement in which he declares that whatsoever is done to the least of his brethren, be it good or bad, is done onto him (Cf. 25:31-46). These words were taken with such seriousness by Mother Teresa that she regarded everybody, especially the destitute, as Christ in disguise¹⁶⁰.

The realization that Christ is somehow present in every human being is the acme of Mother Teresa’s anthropology. To try to understand the human being without Christ is to miss the core of that anthropology; and without this core, Mother Teresa’s life and mission are incomprehensible. Christ’s presence in the needy is the key to understanding any philanthropic activity she ever engaged in. She understood her vocation and that of Missionaries of Charity as a call to belong to Jesus¹⁶¹, and dedicated her life in working for the poor only because she saw Christ in them¹⁶². Holiness or spiritual maturity in her reckoning thus consists in recognizing Christ in one’s neighbour and treating him

¹⁵⁸ PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Rome 1943, n 1.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 91.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 70.

¹⁶¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 233.

¹⁶² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 69.

accordingly. Hence, Teresan humanitarianism is not born out of sheer pity for suffering man, but out of love for Christ present in all men. And where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of God.

2.5. THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The constitution of the human being consists of a spiritual component as was seen previously. This alone entails a pneumatological dimension of anthropology; but unaided human nature, especially since the fall, is unable to attain its purpose. Cognizant of the fall, the resultant weakening of human nature, and the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised, before his ascension to heaven, to send his disciples a helper, the Spirit of truth. “Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. [...] I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you to bear now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth [...]” (Jn 16:7-13). The title “Paraclete” used for the Spirit in this translation is a transliteration of the Greek word *Parakletos* which has various nuances in English like advocate, intercessor, counsellor, protector, and support¹⁶³. The nuances all point to the role of the Holy Spirit in human life. Jesus’ promise of sending the Spirit was like telling the disciple that without his Spirit no man can achieve the full potential of his life.

Only occasionally is the theme of the Holy Spirit found in the writings and/or speeches of Mother Teresa, but the few references to it reveal her fundamental conviction that the human being is capable of living an authentically human life only thanks to the inspiration and empowerment of the Holy Spirit who dwells in man.

2.5.1. THE HUMAN BODY AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Temple of the Holy Spirit” is of biblical origin, and is an image that is sometimes used in Christian literature to refer to the human body. Mother Teresa’s instructions to her sisters show proof of her belief that the Holy Spirit actually lives in a person who gives the Spirit a chance (as in the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, especially Baptism and Confirmation). She urges: “Let us also remember that our body is the

¹⁶³ Cf. footnote 14 h in, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, p. 1777.

temple of the Holy Spirit and for that reason we must respect it always with neatly mended clothes [...] In the same way, we should never cover the temple of the Holy Spirit – which is our body – with torn, dirty, untidy clothes [...]”¹⁶⁴. The main issue for her is respect for the human body which she exhorts her sisters to show by avoiding torn and untidy clothes. But hers is not a baseless appeal. The human body deserves respect mainly for the anthropologically relevant fact that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Although her words were directed to a specific audience, the truth they contain applies to all. A right understanding of the human being, according to her, necessarily takes into account the Holy Spirit that dwells in man. This in turn shapes man’s attitude towards his own body and those of other human beings. The human body ought always to be handled with care and respect. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons Mother Teresa herself was so concerned about the health condition of the poorest of the poor was this recognition of their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

2.5.2. THE SANCTIFYING EFFECTS OF THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Apart from being a motive, as Mother Teresa holds, for the human being to respect his body, it may be asked whether the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is of any good to man. Mother Teresa, without any speck of doubt, would answer in the affirmative. Holiness to which man is called by his divine Creator is a “fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit in a soul”¹⁶⁵. For this very reason, the Church refers to the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier¹⁶⁶. However, the sanctity wrought by the Spirit is not something automatic. The Holy Spirit effects holiness in a person to the extent that the person opens up himself to the workings of the Spirit. Lack of cooperation with the Holy Spirit may make holiness appear as a reality for a privileged few.

In answer to remarks people made about her sanctity, Mother Teresa used to say what has come to be one of her most famous maxims that “Holiness is not the luxury of a few, it is a simple duty for each one of us”¹⁶⁷. She calls holiness a “simple duty” not in the sense that its acquisition is easy, but that it is attainable, and attainable by all.

¹⁶⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 243.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 294.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. CCC, n. 14.

¹⁶⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 342.

Whether one actually becomes holy therefore depends on one's willingness and disposition. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council similarly state that everyone in the Church, whether belonging to the hierarchy or being cared for by it, is called to holiness¹⁶⁸. Mother Teresa's belief in this is unmistakable in the numerous exhortations and encouragements she gave to various categories of people to make strong resolutions and put in the required efforts to be holy.

The Holy Spirit brings about holiness in the life of man by helping him to pray. The consciousness of this role of the Holy Spirit made Mother Teresa advise a group of people: "Ask your guardian angel to teach you to pray. Above all, ask the Holy Spirit to pray in you. Ask the Spirit to come in you to pray [...]"¹⁶⁹. The sanctification of man is impossible without prayer which is already "itself a desire for perfection, since no one would sincerely pray who did not wish to become better"¹⁷⁰. But since man, on his own, does not know how to pray properly, he needs the assistance of the Spirit to personally make his petitions for him in groans that cannot be put into words: "and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God's holy people are always in accordance with the mind of God" (Rom 8:17). A person who cooperates with the Holy Spirit in the process of his own sanctification experiences a certain joy which Mother Teresa calls a characteristic mark of the kingdom of God¹⁷¹.

2.5.3. COLLABORATION OF MAN WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

It needs also be noted that, as Mother Teresa understood it, the Holy Spirit transforms and sanctifies not only the lives of individual persons, but the life of every man, and indeed of the whole world – *consecratio mundi*. Because she herself was transformed, she interpreted her call to found the Missionaries of Charity, which was certainly the work of the Holy Spirit, as a grace for the whole world. The call to take

¹⁶⁸ Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 39.

¹⁶⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁰ A. TANQUEREY, *The Spiritual Life*, trans. H. Branderis, Brattleboro 2015, p. 243.

¹⁷¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 316.

Christ to the poorest of the poor¹⁷² had no limits. And the Holy Spirit was always there to guide. Kathryn Spink observes in her biography of Mother Teresa: “Prior to the election she [Mother Teresa] called them [Missionary Sisters of Charity] to deep prayer, to purity of heart, openness to the Holy Spirit, and the desire only to do with great love what must be done for the glory of God and for his Church”¹⁷³. Mother Teresa was conscious of the Holy Spirit’s ever presence and guidance of her activities and those of the congregation. Moreover, Mother Teresa’s works of charity succeeded thanks to the extraordinary spiritual vision which the Holy Spirit infused in her to see and love Christ in each individual person¹⁷⁴. The utter respect she had for the value of every human life and the courage in facing all sorts of challenges came as the result of the Holy Spirit dwelling in her. Thus, the Holy Spirit in her changed her life and that of the world around her. The Holy Spirit vivifies and makes humanity better. In summary, to be authentically human is to be holy, and to be holy means to live both in the Holy Spirit and according to the Holy Spirit. Living according to the Holy Spirit is exemplified in the life of Mother Teresa.

2.6. CONCLUSION

This whole chapter has captured basic points of Mother Teresa’s concept of man. Some aspects of her anthropology intersect with the understanding of man in the Indian thought patterns, but there are certainly several and essential differences. Her vision of man was influenced by her Christian faith rather than the culture she found herself in. That vision which this chapter presents is at once ontological, descriptive and functional.

As the perfect image of God, Jesus is the exemplar of what it means to be human, and his declaration that whatever is done to the least of his brethren is done to him makes Mother Teresa see him present in every human being. Ultimately, man becomes truly himself thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and hence the pneumatological dimension of man. This notion of the human being gave shape to Mother Teresa’s way of life or spirituality.

¹⁷² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 40.

¹⁷³ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 221.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 286.

CHAPTER THREE:

MOTHER TERESA’S SPIRITUALITY

3.0. INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, the anthropological vision of Mother Teresa was investigated. The investigations revealed conditions that make possible the spirituality which Mother Teresa lived. We shall go on now to look at the nature of such a spirituality with particular attention on its sources, goal, means by which a person can develop in it, and the deepening of the theological virtues as the flowering of Mother Teresa’s spirituality. It seems good to consider what we mean by spirituality before delving into details of Mother Teresa’s spirituality.

3.1. THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY

“Spirituality” is a term that has continued to grow in popularity. Besides its traditional use in circles of religion, it is also increasingly being employed in domains of health care, education, social work, occupational therapy, workplace leadership, counselling. But one would be grossly mistaken to think that this widespread use implies a common understanding. Sometimes what is meant by “spirituality” varies from profession to profession or from person to person. Researchers admit that “the nature of the definition of spirituality [...] remains problematic”¹. The reason why there has been no agreement on the meaning of “spirituality” is open to debate, but there are suggestions in some quarters that some people prefer to keep the term as loosely-defined as possible for their own interest². Given the fuzziness of this term, it is appropriate to delimit what we mean by it especially in this chapter dedicated to the theme of spirituality. Etymologically speaking, “spirituality” is derived from the Latin *spiritualitas* which is related to *spiritus* (spirit) and *spiritualis* (spiritual). *Spiritus* and *spiritualis* on their part are Latin translations of the Greek *pneuma* and *pneumatikos*

¹ T. LYNN et alii, *Spirituality and Religiousness: A Diversity of Definitions*, “Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health” 13 (2011), p. 158.

² Cf. L. BREGMAN, *Defining Spirituality: Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term*, “The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling” 58 (2004), p. 157.

respectively, terms frequently employed in Pauline theology³. In this system, the terms are used not to establish a contrast between the spiritual and the bodily or material realities, but to signify different ways of life. “For Paul, the ‘pneumatic’ or ‘spiritual’ person is one whose whole being and life are ordered, led, or influenced by the ‘Spirit of God’ [...], whereas the person who is ‘sarkic’, that is, ‘carnal’ or ‘fleshly’, or who is ‘psychic’ or ‘animal’ is one whose whole being and life are opposed to God’s Spirit”⁴. The Pauline understanding of spirituality as a way of life according to the Spirit of God is the direction taken in this work.

Of the many available definitions of spirituality, the one by Walter Principe seems the best suited for our discussion of the spirituality of Mother Teresa. For him, spirituality “is the way some person understood and lived within his or her historical context a chosen religious ideal in sensitivity to the realm of the spirit or the transcendent”⁵. The acknowledgement that spirituality is a way of life is the first thing to be born in mind when attempting an understanding of Mother Teresa’s spirituality. A hint to this understanding is found already in the early Church as it stands written in the *Didache*: “There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways”⁶. The way that leads to life, according to the above definition of spirituality is the one inspired by sensitivity to the realm of the spirit or the transcendent. The transcendence in Mother Teresa’s case is God whose will she spent her life trying to fulfil. Also, this definition does not divorce spirituality from religion as is the tendency of some contemporary definitions. It is therefore appropriate for our discussion because Mother Teresa’s spirituality can only be understood in the context of her Christian religion. Again, Principe’s definition takes into account the historical context in which a person lives. It was the concrete situation of the Calcutta of Mother Teresa’s days that gave shape to the way of life that has come to be known as her spirituality. There is good reason to think that had she not gone to Calcutta at that particular point in time, Mother Teresa would not have developed this way of living.

³ Cf. W. PRINCIPE, *Christian Spirituality*, in: M. Downey (ed.), *The Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Collegeville 1993, p. 931.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ W. PRINCIPE, *Towards Defining Spirituality*, “*Studies in Religion*” 12 (1983), p. 135.

⁶ ANONYMOUS, *Didache*, 1,1., in, <https://earlychurch.com/the-didache/>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

Following Principe's model, Mother Teresa's spirituality may be said to be the way she understood and lived within the context of Calcutta the Christian ideal of love for each and every human person especially the poorest of the poor understood as an image of God or Christ in disguise. Although its formative years were in Calcutta, this spirituality is now lived in several countries across the globe wherever disciples of Mother Teresa are to be found. Let us go on to look at its sources.

3.2. SOURCES OF MOTHER TERESA'S SPIRITUALITY

Elements of the Christian way of living that can, with good reason, be called Teresan Spirituality, are found in letters, journals and notes, instruction to the sisters, public speeches, interviews with biographers, and other writings of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The best collection of her private writings is published in *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*, a book edited and with commentary by Brian Kolodiejchuk⁷. Another important source, also compiled and edited by Fr Kolodiejchuk is an anthology of Mother Teresa's teachings titled: *Where There is Love, There is God*. It attempts to impart concisely and thematically what Mother Teresa believed and taught about some fundamental issues of human life⁸. Several other collections of Mother Teresa's teachings exist such as *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa* by Matthew Kelly. In addition to this, there are also biographies of Mother Teresa some of which are written by people who were her personal friends like Eileen Egan⁹ who wrote *Such A Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa – The Spirit and the Work*. Other works like *Something Beautiful for God*¹⁰ which tell the beautiful story of Mother Teresa's work among the poorest of the poor give an insight into her vision of life. It goes without saying that the *Constitutions of the Missionaries of Charity*¹¹ are a

⁷ Brian Kolodiejchuk is a Canadian born priest of the Missionaries of Charity Fathers, a clerical religious institute founded by Mother Teresa and Fr Joseph Langford. Fr Kolodiejchuk is the postulator of the cause of the beatification and canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and director of the Mother Teresa Center.

⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. ix.

⁹ Eileen Egan was a lay co-worker of Mother Teresa and knew her for more than three decades.

¹⁰ *Something Beautiful for God* is an interpretation of Mother Teresa's life through her conversation with Malcom Muggeridge, a worldly sceptic who converted to Christianity thanks to Mother Teresa's exemplary influence.

¹¹ I got insights into these Constitutions only through secondary sources. It seems they are not available to the public. I sent an email to the director of the Mother Teresa Centre begging to be given access to their Constitutions and the following is the response I got on 20 September 2021: "Dear Marcel, I apologize for answering you late. We are sorry but we do not lend our Constitutions. God bless you, Sr. M. Elisabeth MC".

very useful source. In these, and many more, one comes to grasp the contours of Mother Teresa's spirituality.

What is more, the question of sources is also about influence. "No Christian spirituality is original in the sense of being utterly new; rather, each Christian spirituality draws on elements common to the tradition, emphasizing one or another, blending them into a whole that is distinctive"¹². Mother Teresa did not develop her way of Christian living in a vacuum. She was born and raised in a Christian environment wherein she tapped from the spiritual heritage of numerous sons and daughters of the Church who had gone before her. We shall, therefore, consider here the resources that contributed to the shaping of her spirituality.

The first of these influences is, without doubt, the Bible. The main principles that governed the life of Mother Teresa such as the thirst of Christ which she sought to quench¹³, an understanding of the human being as the image of God¹⁴, and the realization that whatever is done for the poor is done for Christ¹⁵ are all based on biblical teachings. Even her absolute trust in divine providence was inspired by the text of Mt 6:25-34. Extra-biblical sources of her spirituality are the lives and teachings of saints like Ignatius of Loyola to whose *Spiritual Exercises* Mother Teresa was introduced in her youth in their Sacred Heart parish which was run by the Jesuits¹⁶; St Thérèse of Lisieux, her patroness from whom she picked up the virtue of doing small things with great love¹⁷. Although Mother Teresa herself used to explain that she chose her religious name after St Thérèse of Lisieux, Alphonso points to the possibility that she would have also been influenced and inspired by St Teresa of Ávila¹⁸. A great influence to Mother Teresa's spirituality, without doubt, was her former congregation: the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the Loreto Sisters). She might have been dissatisfied with their outreach to the poor, but her life style as a Loreto sister instilled in her so many good values

¹² R. ZAWILLA, *Dominican Spirituality*, in: M. Downey (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Minnesota 1993, p. 287-288.

¹³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 41; Jn 19:28.

¹⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 77; Gen 1:27.

¹⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 167; Mt 25.

¹⁶ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Cf. J. GAUTHIER, *I Thirst: St Therese and Mother Teresa*, New York 2005, p. 12.

¹⁸ Cf. G. ALPION, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, p. 177.

especially the importance of prayer¹⁹. She definitely learned a lot from them. In addition to these major influences, there are also other saints that she infrequently quotes in her writings like St. Cabrini. With bits and pieces gathered from these sources, Mother Teresa weaved a way of life for herself and her followers with a particular goal.

3.3. THE GOAL OF HER SPIRITUALITY

Whatever contours it may have, the ultimate goal of any Christian spirituality is union with God²⁰ or God's glory; and the proximate goals are the sanctification and salvation of man²¹. But each person works towards the attainment of these general goals according to his or her own charisms, temperament, aptitudes, and the concrete historical situation in which he or she lives. These factors, therefore, differentiate Christian spiritualities or spiritual traditions one from another; giving each its specific goal. Hence, in an era facing the challenge of Albigensian heresy, St Dominic prioritized preaching so as to defend orthodoxy and bring about conversion²²; while in response to a concern for material success that characterized 13th century Italy, St Francis of Assisi made a spiritual emphasis on poverty²³. Within the general goal of union with God, these two saints each had a particular goal determined by his own life circumstances. The same is true of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

It was seen in the first chapter of this work that she lived in India at the time when that territory was struggling to free herself from British imperialism that was draining India of her natural and human resources, and leaving the locals in situations of extreme poverty. Imperialism likewise widened the gap between the castes; and the rising tide of Indian nationalism intensified the already critical Hindu-Muslim divide that led to frequent riots between the two even after independence. This, together with the natural disasters that often hit parts of India, resulted to the displacement of people from one part of India to another. Mother Teresa recounts her experience in one of such riots in 1946 thus: "I went out from St Mary's, Entally [...] I had three hundred girls in the

¹⁹ Cf. A. CHIDIAC, *The Spirituality of Mother Teresa*, "The Australasian Catholic Record" 93 (2016), p. 473.

²⁰ Cf. R. McBrien, *Catholicism*, p. 1022.

²¹ Cf. J. AUMANN, *Spiritual Theology*, London 2017, p. 37.

²² Cf. R. ZAWILLA, *Dominican Spirituality*, p. 287.

²³ Cf. P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, p. 91.

boarding school and we had nothing to eat. We were not supposed to go out into the streets, but I went anyway. Then I saw the bodies on the streets, stabbed, beaten, lying there in strange positions in their dried blood. We [Loreto Sisters] had been behind our safe walls. We knew that there had been rioting. People had been jumping over our walls, first a Hindu, then a Muslim. You see, our compound was between Moti Jihl²⁴, which was mainly Muslim then, and Tengra, with the potteries and the tanneries. That was Hindu. We took in each one and helped him to escape safely. When I went out on the streets – only then I saw the death that was following them”²⁵. The first-hand experience of the squalor and violence in which many people lived in Calcutta left a lasting impression on Mother Teresa’s memory.

The situation of Calcutta gave Mother Teresa’s spirituality the specific goal of going out to the streets to serve Christ in the destitute, the unwanted, the unloved and the uncared for. And her services were not limited to Calcutta or India, but extended to any other part of the world where suffering of any kind was found. Serving the poorest of the poor was then the trajectory that she took in her strive to be united with God. Anthony Chidiac observes: “Her spirituality is based on the premise that through serving the marginalised and disenfranchised in our society we are in essence ministering to Christ and consequently helping to ‘quench his thirst’”²⁶. Quenching the thirst of Christ through working for, and with, the poorest of the poor is then the goal of Mother Teresa’s spirituality. Her followers, the Missionaries of Charity, follow this same path till today. She used to tell them: “Are we just another congregation? Why do we exist? We exist to quench the thirst of Jesus, to proclaim the love of Christ, and Jesus’ thirst for souls”²⁷. Mother Teresa thus sought to become holy (as do her followers till today) by living a life of charitable service to the poorest of the poor who are understood as Christ in his

²⁴ Moti Jihl which means Pearl Lake was so called because of a discoloured sump water pond at its centre. It is a slum area near St. Mary’s School where Mother Teresa was teaching. The teeming life of Calcutta was reflected in Moti Jihl whose problems grew more acute each year. Around the pond sprang the huts of the poor, mud-floored hovels, for which poor families had to struggle to meet the tiny monthly rental. The very poor lives of the people in this slum was one among the factors that made Mother Teresa to start thinking of giving herself radically to work for the poor. Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 25.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 27-28.

²⁶ A. CHIDIAC, *The Spirituality of Mother Teresa*, p. 469.

²⁷ J. GAUTHIER, *I Thirst: St Therese and Mother Teresa*, p. 16.

distressing disguise. Besides the goal, Mother Teresa equally indicated the means by which a person can grow in this spirituality.

3.4. THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

One's own sanctification is one of the major reasons for becoming a religious. Mother Teresa once told her sisters: "there is no sense in joining a religious society if you don't want to be holy"²⁸. Holiness is the goal, but what are the means that lead to this and other goals of spiritual development? The success of any endeavour is possible only when goals are backed by effective means of achieving them. Following this natural course, Mother Teresa's efforts to be united with God through life among the poor did not lack such means. Practical woman that she was, Mother Teresa did not search far for ways of growth in the spiritual life. She found them all in the rich spiritual heritage of the Church: the sacraments, prayer, evangelical counsels, and spiritual direction. The way she understood and utilized these means is the subject of our investigation here.

Mother Teresa's aspirations for herself and her followers is revealed in one of her addresses to the sisters: "with you, my sisters, I will not be satisfied by being just good religious. I want to be able to offer God a perfect sacrifice. Only holiness perfects the gift"²⁹. Being a good religious is already something good, but that alone was not sufficient for Mother Teresa. The very reason for the existence of her congregation is the holiness of its members and nothing short of that would satisfy her. She pointed to members of her religious family as many ways of achieving holiness as possible. It goes without saying that faith initiates the process of growth in holiness, but faith understood as a theological virtue is seen in this scheme more as a fruit of the following means. It shall be considered alongside hope and charity. For now, let us examine the sacraments.

3.4.1. THE SACRAMENTS

Christian spirituality, the way of life according to the Spirit of God, is impossible without the sacraments which Christ instituted³⁰ and entrusted to his Church. In fact, the

²⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 251.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 150.

³⁰ CCC, n. 1114.

second important phase in a person's spiritual life, the moment when one chooses consciously to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, is the moment of Christian initiation (it includes the reception of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist). The importance of this moment in spiritual flourishing underscores the necessity of sacraments in Christian spirituality. Sacraments effectively bring about sanctification and salvation not simply because they have Christ for their instituter, but, above all, "they are efficacious because in them Christ himself is at work"³¹.

Mother Teresa's Christian background offered her the opportunity to comprehend the significance of sacraments from an early age. She herself was baptized on 27 August 1910, a day after her birth³²; and she considered this date that marks the beginning of her Christian life more important than the day of her birth³³. She received First Holy Communion at the age of five and a half; and testifies that since then the love for souls (human beings) has been within her: "It [love for souls] grew with the years – until I came to India – with the hope of saving many souls. In those 18 years [the years before she left home] I have tried to live up to His desires. – I have been burning with longing to love Him as He has never been loved before. – I have been praying"³⁴. Mother Teresa's love which grew and gave rise to a spirituality that has the growth of the whole human being at its centre started with the first reception of Jesus in the Eucharist. Reception of the Eucharist became for her, from that time, a frequent spiritual practice. She saw in the Eucharist the bread from heaven which gives eternal life to anyone who eats of it (Cf. Jn 6:50-51). The sacrament of Christ's body and blood became a strong influence in her spiritual life as Brian Kolodiejchuk recounts: "To make her life a true sacrifice of love, she united herself to Jesus' sacrifice in celebration of the Eucharist, and offered herself with Him to be broken and given to the poorest of the poor"³⁵. As she received freely of Christ' body and blood in the Eucharist, she likewise gave of herself freely to the people in need.

³¹ CCC, n. 1127.

³² Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 8.

³³ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 3.

³⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 58.

³⁵ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 33.

A worthy reception of the Eucharist demands the celebration of another sacrament – Confession or Reconciliation. Human beings are liable to sin, and often they do sin. Mother Teresa was very conscious of her own sinfulness. “Think not of me,” she wrote to Archbishop P rier, “for I am very sinful and most unworthy of His love [...]”³⁶. “My own Jesus – what You ask it is beyond me – I can hardly understand half of the things You want – I am unworthy – I am sinful – I am weak. – Go Jesus and find a more worthy soul, a more generous one”³⁷. Aware of her own sinfulness and trusting in God’s mercy, Mother Teresa went regularly to Confession in order to be cleansed and to reconcile with God and with her brothers and sisters in the human family. The humility to admit that one is a sinner is necessary for spiritual growth, and Mother Teresa demonstrated this humility each time she went to Confession.

In her own words: “we go to confession as a sinner with sin, and we come out as a sinner without sin”³⁸. The distinction she makes between “a sinner with sin” and “a sinner without sin” is fascinating. But it is, strictly speaking, redundant to refer to someone before he goes for Confession as “a sinner with sin” since sin is what makes a person a sinner, and calling someone a sinner already implies a person with sin. However, “sinner with sin” could have been used for the purpose of emphasis, which is quite understandable. What warrants more explanation is the expression “a sinner without sin”. If sin is what makes someone a sinner, how can someone without sin be called a sinner? Taken in isolation, the expression “sinner without sin” is self-contradictory. But Mother Teresa uses that expression alongside “sinner with sin” to compare the condition of a human person before his sins are forgiven in the sacrament of Confession, and the condition of that same person after his sins have been washed away. In this context, “being a sinner” does not refer solely to what happens to a man as a result of his personal sin, but describes more that inclination to sin which theology calls concupiscence³⁹. Thus, when Mother Teresa says that “we go for Confession as a sinner with sin”, she means that before Confession we have both our personal sins and

³⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 85.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 96.

³⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 70.

³⁹ Concupiscence is an inclination to sin inherent in all human beings which resulted from original sin that weakened human nature in its powers. Cf. CCC, n. 418.

the inclination to sin. And when she says that “we come out [of Confession] as a sinner without sin”, she means that after the sacrament we are without our personal sins, but the inclination to sin remains. In other words, human beings are never free from the propensity for sin as long as they are in this life whether or not they go for the sacrament of Confession. The sacrament of Confession does not take away concupiscence. This is in perfect agreement with the Church’s teaching on concupiscence⁴⁰. What is strange and specific to Mother Teresa is that she considers a human being a sinner by the mere fact of this disposition. However, calling a human being a sinner for this reason does not mean he is culpable. Although a sinner, he can be “a sinner without sin”. The consciousness of being a sinner even without sin can be very helpful for the Christian life because it keeps one humble and enables one to strive to overcome one’s weaknesses and to become better. Will a person’s spiritual life not be terribly ruined were he to imagine that he is perfect and without sin? What need will he have of striving if he were already sinless and perfect? But it is certain that as long as one is still on earth, there is always the need to improve, to be better. Hence, the consciousness that one is always a sinner, as Mother Teresa advocates his useful for spiritual growth.

Moreover, Mother Teresa saw the sacrament of Reconciliation as a motivation to forgive those who sin against us: “We receive forgiveness from Jesus [so] that we can also give forgiveness”⁴¹. And in forgiving one grows in likeness to God. Frequent reception of the sacraments (Reconciliation and the Eucharist)⁴² are an irreplaceable means of growth in spirituality. Mother Teresa received them often and encouraged others to do so. Although there are different sacraments, Louis Bouyer cautions that “we must not think of them as merely seven parallel channels of grace. We must go back to the most traditional idea according to which they all form one single organism of the life of the Spirit in the Church”⁴³. While pointing to the unity of the sacraments, this

⁴⁰ Cf. CCC, n. 1263.

⁴¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 49.

⁴² Some sacraments like Baptism and Confirmation leave an indelible mark on the recipient and can thus be received only once in a life time. Frequent reception therefore refers to those such as Reconciliation and the Eucharist that a person can receive many times.

⁴³ L. BOUYER, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, trans. M. Perkins, Notre Dame, Indiana 2013, p. 141.

remark highlights their role in the Church's spiritual life. To receive the sacraments frequently, one needs to be a person of prayers.

3.4.2. A LIFE OF PRAYER

Prayer is not an uncommon practice even in the world that is growing more secular. The act of prayer signifies that the person or community at prayer “recognizes someone with whom they have a deep and meaningful connection who is greater than, and concerned about, those who pray”⁴⁴. Drawing from the experience of the human being of all times, prayer could be said to be a medium through which man puts the meaning of his life in relation to the mystery of God and of his plan for the world⁴⁵. Prayer has thus been an important element of various cultures around the world and throughout history. It is found in its different forms in the ancient cultures of Africa, Mesopotamia, the Americas, Europe, and India. Prayer often takes the form of a chant, an invocation, an incantation, or libation. In these prayers, “we can see a testimony of the religious dimension and of the desire for God engraved on the heart of every human being, which receives fulfilment and full expression in the Old and in the New Testament”⁴⁶. Prayer is very much shaped by the understanding of God which the person who prays has. In Old Testament figures like Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, there is a noticeable development in the notion of God from an impersonal force to a personal God. This “personalistic” idea of God reflects in their prayers. The human being's way of relating with God grows even more intimate in the New Testament. In response to his disciples' request to teach them how to pray, Jesus taught them to call God: “Father” (Cf. Lk 11:1-4). Hence, from approaching God as some distant and impersonal force, man has gradually learned to relate with him as a child with his father. Mother Teresa related with God in this way. It is said of her that when she was in need or difficulty, “she turned to God, making her requests with the trust and the expectation of a child dependent on its father”⁴⁷. This shades light on her understanding of what prayer is.

⁴⁴ L. CUNNINGHAM – K. EGAN, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*, New York 1996, p. 67.

⁴⁵Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show Us How to Pray*, trans. L'Osservatore Romano, San Francisco 2013, p. 13.

⁴⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show Us How to Pray*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 3.

Two ways of understanding prayer which could loosely be described as the active and the passive ways emerge from Mother Teresa's prayer life. The active way arises from the traditional Christian understanding of prayer as talking and listening to God. It therefore involves the talking, the singing, or any activity a person performs in the name of prayer. Mother Teresa surely prayed in this way as evident in the above statement that she made requests to God. The other way she understood prayer is rather passive. According to her, prayer is more than an exchange of words or an activity that a person performs. It is, above all, a mode or state of being in union with God that involves one's full intention. She confesses with very few words: "For me, prayer is that oneness with God"⁴⁸. In this way, it is possible to follow St Paul's instruction to "pray constantly" (1 Thess 5:17) without necessarily saying or doing anything. Thus understood, prayer is both a means and an end of spiritual development. It is a means of spiritual development in the sense that it involves those particular activities that lead a person to union with God like attending Holy Mass, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, litanies, and novenas. At the same time, prayer is an end of spiritual development in the sense that spiritual development leads to oneness with God and that oneness with God is itself prayer.

We have seen thus far that more than a recitation of some formulae, prayer, according to Mother Teresa, is a life of constant and close union with God who is present in much the same way in the streets and slums as he is in the convent⁴⁹. Missionaries of Charity are formed to live this kind of life so as to attain the sanctification they desire. A section of the rules which Mother Teresa herself wrote for her congregation reads: "The novices must be well taught of the interior life – and their religion. They must be given every possible care and help to understand and live lives of close union with God. They must learn to be contemplatives in the streets and slums just as much as in their convents"⁵⁰. From this perspective, a life of prayer is a life lived perpetually in the presence of God irrespective of where one finds oneself or what one does. Mother Teresa aligned herself with the wisdom of St John Cassian for whom prayer is never "simply

⁴⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 74.

⁵⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 343.

action or contemplation but a discovery of the balance that exists between the two”⁵¹. A life of prayer and spiritual maturity are hence convertible.

Moreover, the role of prayer in Mother Teresa’s spirituality is better understood vis-à-vis her mission which involved, in a rudimentary form, carrying “Christ into the homes and streets of the slums, [among] the sick, dying, the beggars and the little street children”⁵². She often underscored that her role in that whole enterprise was that of a pencil or an instrument to be used for a work that was primarily Christ’s: “I am like a little pencil in God’s hand. He does the thinking. He does the writing. The pencil has only to be allowed to be used”⁵³. An instrument fulfils its purpose only to the extent that it allows itself to be used by the principal agent. This entails, in the case of a human instrument, a total surrender especially of one’s will to that of the agent. Since the work Mother Teresa was called to do was to belong principally to Christ⁵⁴, it demanded that oneness with God which she calls prayer⁵⁵. In a letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, she states: “To enable me to do this kind of work, a life of prayer and self-sacrifice is necessary”⁵⁶. Prayer could thus be said to be a kind of fuel or power source without which the work cannot be done. To the extent that spiritual development entails application of self to one’s mission, it can be asserted that it also depends on prayer since success in mission is a function of prayer.

Furthermore, Mother Teresa’s apprehension of spiritual development as being only all for Jesus or allowing Christ to live in oneself (Cf. Gal 2:20), implies that prayer is one sure way of reaching such a height. Her letter to Fr Jambrekovic stands as witness: “One thing, pray much for me – I need prayer now more than ever. I want to be only all for Jesus – truly and not only by name and dress”⁵⁷. Two truths are hereby conveyed: first, one cannot advance in spirituality on one’s own accord – God’s assistance sought

⁵¹ R. FOSTER – G. BEEBE, *Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion*, London 2009, p. 194.

⁵² MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 341.

⁵³ I. HOWDEN, *Mother Teresa*, London 1998, p. 23.

⁵⁴ Cf. M. Muggeridge, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 15.

⁵⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 16.

⁵⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 115.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

in prayer is needed. Second, the intercessory prayers of others, in addition to one's own personal prayer, are necessary means in one's spiritual journey.

It must be said that the idea of prayer as living in the presence of God does not exclude particular forms of prayer. Mother Teresa advocated for a life style that is itself a prayer to God, yet particular forms of prayer still had an important part to play, and particular times are set for that. Daily Mass, adoration, meditation, contemplation, rosary, litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints form part of the prayer life of any Missionary of Charity. Mother Teresa encouraged her spiritual children to pray these forms of prayer more by her own example. A sister who knew her personally remarked: "People were fascinated just watching Mother pray. They would sit there and watching her be really drawn into this mystery"⁵⁸. Through her own life, Mother Teresa teaches the world that a life of prayer is indispensable for anyone who wishes to grow in spirituality. Prayer helps in fidelity to the life of evangelical counsels.

3.4.3. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

In addition to the sacraments and a life of prayer, Mother Teresa recognizes the evangelical counsels⁵⁹ as a means of spiritual development. They are a means stipulated by the Church for her members especially those of Christ's faithful whose vocation it is to live the consecrated life. The hope is that by following Christ more closely in the spirit of the evangelical counsels, the grace of baptism will bear more fruit in them⁶⁰. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states: "The teaching and example of Christ provide the foundation for the evangelical counsels of chaste self-dedication to God, of poverty and of obedience. The Apostles and Fathers of the Church commend them, and so do her doctors and pastors. They therefore constitute a gift of God which the Church has received from her Lord and which by his grace she always safeguards"⁶¹. The way

⁵⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 270.

⁵⁹ Religious make a public profession to order their lives by the evangelical counsels and confirm their intentions by public vows. Hence, there are vows corresponding to the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. We use vows and counsels in a somewhat interchangeable manner in this section. A vow, according to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, is "a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion". Cf. Canon 1191- § 1.

⁶⁰ Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Introduction of the Rite of Initiation to the Religious Life, *Sacris Religionis Vinculis*, n. 1.

⁶¹ VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 43.

to perfection of religious men and women passes through professing and living out the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Mother Teresa sees them through the light of her call and that of the Missionaries of Charity to belong to Jesus⁶². The vows she qualifies as absolute poverty, angelic chastity and cheerful obedience⁶³, are an indispensable means of union with God. To these three vows, she added a fourth: the vow of “wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor”⁶⁴. Let us now consider each of these vows to see how she understands them as a means of spiritual growth.

3.4.3.1. The vow of poverty

The vow of poverty is one of the things that surprise not a few people about the life of religious men and women. How, they wonder, can a person in his or her right senses choose to be poor? This reaction is to be expected since poverty as penury or extreme want is an evil which the human person naturally and rightly avoids. However, Scriptures show that to be poor is not always about destitution. We read in the Psalms that the Lord hears the cry of the poor (Cf. 34). Poverty here is more a matter of mental disposition than lack of material property. The poor man finds favour in the eyes of God not for the mere fact that he is poor, but because he trusts in the Lord. Insofar as it disposes a person to rely more on God than on himself or his possessions, poverty is good. It instils in man the right attitude towards God. The poor then are those who take refuge in the Lord (Cf. Ps 34:8). Jesus declares that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit (Cf. Mt 5:3). And what wealth is comparable with the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven? The Fathers of the Church recognized the wisdom that lies in embracing poverty for the sake of the Kingdom as paradoxically stated by St Ambrose: “But if you will be rich, you must be poor. Then shall you in all things be rich, if you are poor in spirit. It is not property which makes rich, but the spirit”⁶⁵. True riches (the Kingdom of God) can only be acquired through poverty in spirit which consists in trusting God in such fashion that one is ready to let go of any

⁶² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 224.

⁶³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 343-345.

⁶⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 153.

⁶⁵ AMBROSE, *Letter 63*, 89, in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/340963.htm>, [accessed 07/06/2022].

other possessions. It was what Jesus demanded of the rich young man whom he asked to “go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me” (Mt 19:21).

The vow of poverty is built on this theological understanding of poverty as reliance on God. It is important for consecrated life because it enables religious men and women to direct and offer everything that they are and have to God who has called and chosen them. In this way they free themselves from the obstacles which could hinder a total response to God, and become signs of Christ in the world⁶⁶. Mother Teresa appropriates this teaching and makes a distinction between what she calls the poverty of beggars and the poverty of Christ⁶⁷. The nomenclature is suggestive of the world of difference there is between these two forms of poverty. A beggar, in the ordinary sense of the word, is a poor person who lacks basic necessities of life and makes a living from begging. This kind of poverty is properly called destitution and will be dealt with in the fourth chapter of this work. The present chapter focuses rather on the evangelical counsel of poverty or the poverty of Christ.

Jesus Christ lived on earth as a poor person; not because he lacks anything, but because he chose to. The epistle to the Philippians fittingly captures his situation: “Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.” (2:6-8). As the second person of the Triune God, Jesus is Lord of creation for all things were created through him and for him (Cf. Col 1:16), yet he freely chose to assume the lowly condition of humans. And this not for nothing. The reason for his condescension is stated in the creed: “for us men and for our salvation”⁶⁸. By the poverty of Christ therefore, Mother Teresa means that poverty freely chosen for love of others.

The vow of poverty in the writings of Mother Teresa is Christ-centred because it is modelled on the example of Jesus. By that vow, a person promises to love selflessly

⁶⁶ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Rome 1996, n. 25.

⁶⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 243.

⁶⁸ Cf. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

like Jesus. Jesus is also the ultimate object of love of the one who professes that vow for she loves Jesus in and through every other person. An extract from one of Mother Teresa's instructions to her sisters reads: "To be able to love Jesus with an undivided love, I *want* to be free. I want to have nothing that will take me away from Him. Our vow of poverty gives us that freedom"⁶⁹. Possessions which are in themselves good could be a hindrance to an undivided love of Jesus. For this reason, Mother Teresa sees the need for one who wishes to belong totally to Jesus to take the vow of poverty by which she gives up the freedom to use the things she has and likes. Something paradoxical about evangelical poverty is that by giving up the freedom to use what one has, one is actually liberated from the bondage of possessions and is capable of living entirely for God. The vow of poverty both demands and fosters freedom⁷⁰. It makes the one who takes it more closely united with Jesus, and so, it is said to be a means of spiritual development.

Voluntary poverty by which a person freely chooses to live in conditions similar to that of the poorest of the poor was particularly important for Mother Teresa as it is for her Missionaries of Charity. "Now in the slums, I can tell that we have the same thing in eating and clothing like they, themselves. We have no fans – we could have – we do not want to. Then we can feel how the poor people feel"⁷¹. Poverty from this perspective is a means of understanding the poor, and in understanding them, they are better served. And in serving the poor, one is serving Christ in his distressing disguise.

This conception of the vow of poverty is supported by the understanding of the human person as a free being, a view to which Mother Teresa subscribes. Poverty as an evangelical counsel is only possible when a free being (the human person) chooses not to amass wealth for himself or herself. Since this vow brings a person closer to God which is a spiritual growth, it reveals anthropology at the service of spirituality. This vow is also important from a psychological perspective in that the self-mastery one gains from detaching oneself from material possessions can spill over to other areas of life, and so the vow of poverty can help one to live out other vows like that of chastity.

⁶⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 224.

⁷⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Rome 1996, n. 10, 107.

⁷¹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 242.

3.4.3.2. The vow of chastity

Mother Teresa uses “the vow of chastity” to refer to one of the vows taken by religious men and women in the Church. The vow consists in the renunciation of marriage and family life for Christ’s sake or for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Before a theological explanation of this vow, it is necessary to clarify a confusion that sometimes arises between the concept of “chastity” and “celibacy”. In the Church’s understanding, “chastity” refers to fidelity in the marital status to which God has called a person and to which that person has committed him/herself. There is thus chastity in marriage and chastity in celibacy (to which religious men and women commit themselves). The former implies abstention from unlawful sexual intercourse; while the latter denotes abstention from all sexual intercourse. Precision demands some qualification whenever a person uses the term “chastity”. This, unfortunately, is not the case with Mother Teresa. She frequently, uses the term “chastity” without any qualification. Thankfully, the context makes it possible to determine which of them she means. Our interest here is on chastity in celibacy which she simply refers to as “the vow of chastity”.

Scriptural basis for the practice of celibacy is found in the example of Jesus and of John the Baptist before him, both of whom remained chaste in an unmarried state. In addition to living a life of chastity, Jesus teaches about the special value of virginity⁷². A good instance is when he tells Peter and the rest of the disciples that “there is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times as much in this present age and, in the world to come, eternal life” (Lk 18:29). To understand this text as a condemnation of family relationships and material possessions would be to misread it. Family and possessions are good in the natural order of things, but they fade into insignificance when compared with the supernatural order or the kingdom of God which Jesus was gradually introducing. Building on biblical sources, Max Thurian explains the consecrated life in these words: “As a result of the good news which gives rise to the new order of the kingdom, some people can no longer live according to the habitual laws of nature and

⁷² Cf. T. O’BRIEN (ed.), *Corpus Dictionary of the Western Churches*, Washington, D.C. 1970. P. 140.

instead devote themselves to a state of celibacy. This allows them to proclaim the gospel with greater freedom and also to be sign of the Kingdom of God which is being ushered in”⁷³. This explanation underscores three pillars of celibacy: a practical significance, the inner sense, and an eschatological meaning.

The practical significance of celibacy lies in the fact that a person who renounces marriage and family for the sake of the Gospel is better able to render service to God and the Church than someone with responsibilities to his/her spouse and children. “The unmarried man gives his mind to the Lord’s affairs and to how he can please the Lord; but the man who is married gives his mind to the affairs of this world and to how he can please his wife, and he is divided in mind. So, too, the unmarried woman, and the virgin, gives her mind to the Lord’s affairs and to being holy in body and spirit; but the married woman gives her mind to the affairs of this world and how she can please her husband” (1 Cor 7: 32-34). Marriage has always been considered by the Church as a gift from God. But since the married state involves a person in his/her totality and serving God also demands a total gift of oneself⁷⁴, religious men and women take the vow of chastity in celibacy so as to live entirely for God. Freed from marriage, it is possible to concentrate their energy on how to work for God. Besides the anxiety about how to serve the Lord, celibate people are also anxious about how to please the Lord, that is, to be holy. This desire to be holy in body and spirit “should be understood in the mystical sense of a special relationship with Christ in which prayer and contemplation assume a very important role”⁷⁵. The vow of chastity therefore assists a person in his/her growth in spirituality by bringing about this communion with Jesus Christ. Eschatologically, the vow of chastity in celibacy points to the kingdom of God where love will be experienced in its fullness such that there will be no need for limited intimacy as is the case in marriage. It is already living, in some way, the reality of which Christ says that men and women do not marry at the resurrection (Cf. Mt 22:30)⁷⁶. Every Christian is called to be

⁷³ M. THURIAN, *The Theological Basis for Priestly Celibacy*, in https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_theol_en.html, [accessed 07/06/2022].

⁷⁴ Cf. BENEDICT XVI – R. SARAH, *From the Depths of Our Hearts*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2020, p. 42.

⁷⁵ M. THURIAN, *The Theological Basis for Priestly Celibacy*, in https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_theol_en.html, [accessed 07/06/2022].

⁷⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Rome 1996, n. 20.

detached from this world so as to live a holy life in anticipation of heaven and in service of God and his Church. St Paul exhorts celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God, but he equally realizes that it is a charism that is not given to all (Cf. 1Cor 7:7). Having put forth these brief theological ideas about consecrated life, we can now proceed to examine Mother Teresa's understanding of the vow of chastity as a means of spiritual growth.

Following the Church's teaching as laid out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Mother Teresa understood that choosing to live the consecrated life is choosing at one and the same time to be celibate⁷⁷. The tone of her discourse on chastity, however, betrays some apologetic concerns she must have had. Much emphasis is laid on what chastity is not. "People in the world think that the vow of chastity makes us inhuman, makes us become like a stone, without feelings. Each one of us can tell them it is not true. It is the vow of chastity that gives us the freedom to love everybody, instead of becoming a mother of three or four children. A married woman can love one man; we can love the whole world in God. The vow of chastity does not diminish us, it makes us live to the full if it is kept properly and we don't just limit ourselves to the don'ts"⁷⁸. The human being is indeed a sexual being and the sex drive is as involuntary and natural to him as hunger; therefore, celibacy by which a person renounces the expression of this drive will always carry a tinge of oddity or strangeness.

At the same time, the practice of perpetual or periodic celibacy, especially for some religious reasons, is not uncommon in cultures around the world. In India where Mother Teresa was based, celibacy is a known practice in Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Their monks and nuns take the vow of *brahmacharya*⁷⁹, loosely translated into English as celibacy. Despite this, it remains true that celibacy is practised comparatively by a few religious elites, and is regarded by a great majority of people as bizarre. Mohandas Gandhi is quoted to have made a remark comparable to that of

⁷⁷ Cf. CCC, n. 915.

⁷⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 250.

⁷⁹ The concept of *brahmacharya* is wider than sexual restraint. It is better understood as comprehensive control of all the senses in thought, word and action. Thus a *brahmacharin* is one who seeks to attain the state of "passionlessness". Cf. V. HOWARD, *Rethinking Gandhi's Celibacy: Ascetic Power and Women's Empowerment*, "Journal of the American Academy of Religion" 81(2013), p. 146.

Mother Teresa: “All the world has a right to suspect a *brahmachari* (one who practises *brahmacharya*) and it ought to have this right. The world does not observe *brahmacharya* (celibacy). The world believes that no one can conquer the passions which it cannot itself conquer and that it is only right. Hence we should not be offended by the world’s suspicion”⁸⁰.

The question arises naturally as to what this “world” that the two spiritual gurus are talking about could mean. It probably refers to the ordinary run of people who do not engage in strict spiritual exercises as do the gurus. The times during which the two figures lived suggest that the “world” could mean something more⁸¹. During the 1960s when Mother Teresa’s congregation was growing in leaps and bounds, there was equally progress in the Western world of what has come to be known as the sexual revolution, and the “‘revolution’ did not come from nowhere, or did it suddenly burst into life in the mid-twentieth century”⁸². Studies have shown that the revolution was foreshadowed long before it blossomed. One of such prophets of the sexual revolution is the poet Percy Shelley who believes love to be at the centre of what it means to be human, and declares that “Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty”⁸³. In Shelley’s conception, human beings are prevented from being truly human by unnatural constraints on love⁸⁴. Celibacy surely features in the list of what Shelley and his disciples consider unnatural constraints on love. To their eyes, celibates are either inhuman, stones or human beings without feelings. Ideas generated in the West easily spread to other parts of the world due to the dominating influence of the Western culture. The sexual revolution was no exception. It is against such ideas that Mother Teresa’s rhetoric is directed. She denies that celibacy diminishes the human person.

But Mother Teresa’s discourse on celibacy is more positive than negative. “The vow of chastity is not just a list of don’ts, it is love [...]”⁸⁵. She understood it within the context of God’s purpose of creating the human person – to love and be loved. Celibacy

⁸⁰ V. HOWARD, *Rethinking Gandhi’s Celibacy: Ascetic Power and Women’s Empowerment*, p. 136.

⁸¹ M. Gandhi lived from 1869 to 1948; and Mother Teresa from 1910 to 1997.

⁸² P. ELLIOTT, *The Sexual Revolution: History – Ideology – Power*, Bayswater 2020, p. 1.

⁸³ P. SHELLEY, *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, Baltimore 2004, p. 251.

⁸⁴ Cf. C. TRUEMAN, ‘Love Withers under Constraint’: How the Poet Percy Shelley Foreshadowed the Sexual Revolution of the 960s, “Christianity Today” 66(2022), p. 73.

⁸⁵ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 248.

is a choice to love God over and above any particular individual and to love every other person in him. Mother Teresa's comprehension of it is best described by the word "consecration". She declares: "By the vow of chastity, I not only renounce the married state of life, but I also consecrate to God the free use of my internal and external acts – my affections. I cannot in conscience, love a creature with the love of a woman for a man. I no longer have the right to give that affection to any other creature but God"⁸⁶. The vow of chastity, in her understanding, admits neither ignorance nor coercion. It demands a human being with the full exercise of the rational faculties of the intellect and the will. By it, one knowingly and willingly gives up the satisfaction of her sexual appetite so as to live exclusively for God. For this reason, Mother Teresa considered the vow of celibacy as a means by which she and her sisters could grow spiritually. Rather than diminishing the human person, the practice of celibacy, in Teresan understanding, allows the grandeur of humans to shine out since it shows proof of them as beings capable of controlling their emotions unlike beasts that live at the mercy of brute instincts.

Besides bringing the one who practises it closer to God, the vow of chastity equally enables one to live for others. This is clearly brought out in Pope Benedict XVI's explanation of the biblical concept of "consecration". He writes: "'consecrating' as 'sanctifying' means setting apart from the rest of reality that pertains to man's ordinary everyday life. Something [or someone] that is consecrated is raised into a new sphere that is no longer under human control. But this setting apart also includes the essential dynamic of 'existing for'. Precisely because it is entirely given over to God, this reality is now there for the world, for men, it speaks for them and exists for their healing. We may also say: setting apart and mission form a single whole"⁸⁷. Consecration could never be done for selfish motives. Celibates renounce marriage not in order to run away from family responsibilities but so as to be free to love everybody. Mother Teresa was ever available for the poorest of the poor precisely because of her celibate state. Some non-Christians also hint to this "existing for" as essential to celibacy. It is said that "Gandhi's

⁸⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 249.

⁸⁷ BENEDICT XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, [Part Two], trans. P. Whitmore, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2011, p. 86.

vow of celibacy was motivated by his drive to commit himself to public service [...]”⁸⁸. For consecrated men and women in the Church, the vow of celibacy is necessarily linked to that of obedience.

3.4.3.3. The vow of obedience

Obedience entails a willing and prompt submission of oneself to another in order to carry out his will. The vow of obedience, also known as religious obedience, is a solemn promise to do the will of God as expressed in the instructions of one’s religious superiors. It refers to “that general submission which religious vow to God, and voluntarily promise to their superiors, in order to be directed by them in the ways of perfection according to the purpose and constitutions of their order”⁸⁹. Religious obedience is rooted in the obedience of Christ who following the Father’s will became a man like us; and being like all men are, he was obedient to Mary, his mother, and Joseph, his foster father. The evangelist Luke records that after Mary and Joseph found their child Jesus in the temple, he went to Nazareth with them and “lived under their authority” (2:52). The Church sees in the everyday obedience of Jesus to his mother and legal father a temporal image of his filial obedience to his Father in heaven⁹⁰. Religious are called to follow Jesus’ example by obeying their superiors because obedience to legitimate authority, according to the teaching of Jesus himself, is obedience to God (Cf. Lk 10:16). The vow of obedience demonstrates a sincere desire to live wholly in obedience to God. In the words of the Second Vatican Council: “By their profession of obedience, religious offer the full dedication of their own wills as a sacrifice of themselves to God, and by this means they are united more permanently and securely with God’s saving will”⁹¹. The understanding of obedience as expounded by the Church is the prism through which Mother Teresa understood the vow of obedience⁹².

⁸⁸ V. HOWARD, *Rethinking Gandhi’s Celibacy: Ascetic Power and Women’s Empowerment*, p. 137.

⁸⁹A. VERMEERBCH, *Religion Obedience*, in <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/Religious-Obedience>, [accessed 19/06/2022].

⁹⁰ CCC, n. 532.

⁹¹ VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, n.14.

⁹² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 345.

But this vow by which one surrenders one's will to live in obedience to another may sound repugnant to the intellectual heirs of René Descartes who hold the principle that “you should accept nothing as true on the basis of authority, and you should even doubt your senses”⁹³. Their principle is admittedly epistemological, but it represents the tendency to undermine authority in all respects. The principle invites criticisms from scientific and even epistemological standpoints. Without going into the intricacies contained therein, it suffices to point out that “far from lowering the dignity of the human person, religious obedience leads it to maturity by extending the freedom of the sons [and daughters] of God”⁹⁴. Mother Teresa operated in this matrix that takes God and his authority seriously. In Christian epistemology, God's word as revealed in Sacred Scriptures is a primary source of truth since God cannot deceive⁹⁵. This argues to the effect that God deserves man's obedience. Moreover, God is the Creator who made man out of love, knows better than man, and plans only what is good for the man he created. “Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11).

Considerations such as these inform Mother Teresa's assertion that “True holiness consists in doing God's holy will with a smile”⁹⁶. It consists in obeying promptly. To obey promptly, she says, is to do it now, not tomorrow. “That ‘tomorrow’ easily leads into the tepid way”⁹⁷. Mary the mother of Jesus obeyed promptly for her greatest desire was for the will of God to be done in her life: “let it happen to me as you have said” (Lk 1:38). It may be instructive to inquiry why Jesus obeyed since he did not have to. Mother Teresa herself supplies a convincing answer to this puzzle: love of God and humanity explains the wholehearted obedience of Jesus and Mary. They therefore set themselves up as perfect examples of what it means to be obedient. If the fact that God is the Creator, and that he is incapable of deceit justifies obedience to him, what

⁹³ R. DREHER, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*, New York 2017, p. 34.

⁹⁴ VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 14.

⁹⁵ Cf. CCC, n. 156.

⁹⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 149.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

justifies man's obedience to fellow man? Mother Teresa offers both theological and sociological reasons for obedience to a fellow human being.

Theologically, she argues that a religious superior takes the place of God in her community⁹⁸ and, hence, obedience to her is ultimately obedience to God. This argument has scriptural backings in the words of Christ: "Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me, and those who reject me reject the one who sent me" (Lk 10:16). Obeying a superior with the conviction that one is obeying God through her is what Mother Teresa calls obeying simply. Simplicity, for her, is an important quality of obedience⁹⁹. It brings one closer to God. "Close union with God is a natural result of obedience, perfect obedience. From a human point of view, we come closer to our superiors when we obey and from a supernatural point of view we come closer to God when we obey"¹⁰⁰. Obedience creates communion between the one who obeys and the one obeyed. If the ultimate goal of spiritual development is union with God, and obedience brings one closer to God, then it is natural to regard obedience as a means to spiritual development.

Apart from the theological justification of the vow of obedience, Mother Teresa understands the vow of obedience sociologically in the context of a community. Obedience presupposes a community and makes sense in reference to a common purpose. It is a kind of bond that binds together members of a community, be it a family or a religious congregation. The following text throws more light on her appreciation of this vow: "There is so much trouble in our own communities, so much disturbance, because sisters want to do what they like, live the way they like. Nowadays, many religious speak of the need for dialogue, 'personal freedom,' as if a life of obedience was something where these things are absent. They also speak of the great need for 'community life' – but you cannot have community life without a superior, and the presence of a superior automatically brings obedience. In community life we need someone to take the place of God, and the superior is the means He uses to express His

⁹⁸ Mother Teresa gained the conviction that a superior takes the place of God from her formation as a Loreto sister. In the Constitutions of the Loreto Sisters, the sisters are encouraged to each conform one's will and judgment to that of the superior. Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 366.

⁹⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 260.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

will”¹⁰¹. Insofar as a community is a group of two or more people with a common vision, it needs leadership otherwise it disintegrates into a chaotic situation wherein each person does what she wants and lives the way she likes. Mother Teresa argues that the presence of a superior (a leader of a religious community) bespeaks obedience. It is therefore contradictory to desire community life and yet abhor obedience. Mother Teresa was so convinced about the importance of obedience that she went as far as advocating for blind obedience¹⁰². How seriously one may take this kind of obedience is what we wish to examine now.

It seems useful to recall that Mother Teresa grew up in a traditional family where the only thing children were expected to do whenever their parents spoke was to obey; and that she was at the helm of her congregation from the time of its foundation in 1948 till a few months before her death in 1997. Forty-nine years in authority is a long enough time to affect one’s perception. Given these circumstances, it would have been difficult for her to understand the motivations of religious who speak of the need for dialogue. The long time in office made Mother Teresa see obedience from the vantage point of a superior. Not surprisingly, she expects obedience, in addition to being simple, prompt, and cheerful, to equally be blind. She opines: “Blind obedience puts all the ‘whys’ out of the mind. Once you start using the little word ‘why?’ you will end nowhere. Your life will be an empty life. You obey with your hand, but disobey with your heart [...] It is not easy and we cannot help those ‘whys’ coming into our minds, but we can prevent them from conquering us. As soon as you become aware of them, keep your will away [...] Superiors are not bound to give us the reasons but we are bound to obey”¹⁰³. This idea of unquestioning obedience harks back to early spiritual authors like St John Climacus. We read in the fourth step of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*: “Obedience is the burial place of the will and the resurrection of lowliness. A corpse does not contradict or debate the good or whatever seems bad [...]. Indeed, to obey is, with all deliberateness, to put aside the capacity to make one’s own judgment”¹⁰⁴. Mother Teresa

¹⁰¹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 257.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 260.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

¹⁰⁴ JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. C. LUIBHEID – N. RUSSEL, New York 1982, p. 92.

wholeheartedly bought this idea and it served well her go-getter personality that would not take no for an answer.

We might recast her point and say that questioning the command of a superior endangers obedience and so one should obey blindly or avoid asking questions. This raises a number of difficulties. First of all, a human being is a rational being, as Mother Teresa herself admits in her anthropology. And since a being acts according to its nature, a human act as such will always involve the use of the intellect. This entails seeking understanding through asking questions. Blind obedience whereby one obeys without asking questions thus seems unrealistic and unworthy of human beings. Mother Teresa's concern that asking "why?" may lead to disobedience is understandable. A community where obedience is absent will sooner or later break down. But she fails to realize that not everyone who questions is out to challenge authority. Mary the Mother of Jesus whom she lauds for her obedience did not immediately say "yes" to the angel's message. In the Gospel account according to Luke, it stands written that Mary was deeply disturbed by the angel's greeting, and asked herself what the greeting could mean (Cf. 1:29). Then again, when the angel told her that she was to conceive and bear a son, she questioned: "But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?" (1:34). Mary puts her intellect to use in the face of a divine command. And because she dares to question, she receives the enlightenment that enables her to give an informed consent to God's will.

Genuine questioning leads to understanding and when one understands what she is asked to do and why she is asked to do it, she is better able to fully apply herself to it. This augurs well for both herself and the community. Although, as Mother Teresa says, a superior may not be legally obliged to give reasons, it seems morally commendable for her to give them. Furthermore, superiors do not cease to be humans even though they represent God in their communities. This means that they are fallible and do err at times. Hence, a subordinate's question could help a superior to think twice and avoid a possible mistake. While asserting that obedience is a necessary virtue for any community especial for those who have taken that vow, it needs to be asserted with equal emphasis that blind obedience which could be dehumanizing and encourage infantilism is not a worthy way

of living the vow of obedience. The vow of obedience and the other two evangelical counsels are ordered, in the Missionaries of Charity tradition, to the practice of charity which they take as the fourth vow.

3.4.3.4. The fourth vow

Along with the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience that are obligatory for religious men and women in the Church, Missionaries of Charity take another vow which they usually refer to as “the fourth vow”. It originated in the private vow¹⁰⁵ which Mother Teresa took long before she founded the Missionaries of Charity as shall be seen below. The Bible abounds with passages that talk about private vows made to God or instructions about them (Cf. Gen. 28:19-22; Dt 23: 21-23; 1 Sam. 1:11; Jg 11:30-40; Acts 18: 18; Mt 15:5-6). Private vows have since been a practice in the Church, and the present code of Canon Law makes provisions for it. It is suggested that Mother Teresa would have learned about private vows from the spiritual literature of her time. People like the Jesuit Fr William Doyle and Sr Benigna Consolata made numerous private vows as a hidden way of expressing their love for God. Their example and that of St Thérèse of Lisieux, Mother Teresa’s patron saint would have inspire her to make a private vow to God¹⁰⁶.

Although Mother Teresa first made that vow as a private vow, Missionaries of Charity now make the “fourth vow” as one of their public vows. The vow, in Mother Teresa’s vocalisation, is “wholehearted free service to the poor”¹⁰⁷ or simply: the vow of charity¹⁰⁸. A comment Fr Brian Kolodiejchuk makes about the genesis of this vow in the introductory section of part IV of a collection of Mother Teresa’s teachings deserves some attention. It reads: “In response to the call of Christ to dedicate her life to the poor, Mother Teresa professed a special vow of ‘wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor’ and made it a requirement for her religious family”¹⁰⁹. The formulation of the vow here essentially agrees with that of Mother Teresa, but the claim that the special

¹⁰⁵ As opposed to a public vow, a private vow is one which is not accepted in the name of the Church. Cf. Canon 1192 - § 1.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 30-31.

¹⁰⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 228.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 225.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 153.

vow Mother Teresa made was in response to Christ's call to dedicate her life to the poor introduces an element of confusion. The confusion arises from the fact that the private vow Mother Teresa made was taken in April 1942, whereas Christ's call for her to dedicate her life to the service of the poor took place in September 1946 during the first mystical encounter she had. It is therefore not possible for the vow to have been taken as a response to the call to dedicate her life to the poor; except that Kolodiejchuk is referring to a vow different from that of 1942. But to the best of our knowledge, Mother Teresa made no special vow other than that of 1942. All the same, one may argue that love for the poor and the desire to dedicate herself for them were planted in Mother Teresa since her early childhood, and that the 1946 mystical experience was simply the climax. There is some merit to this objection. But even if that were the case, the problem remains unexplained because the 1942 private vow differs substantially from the fourth vow as it stands today. In one very rare moment, talking about her private vow, Mother Teresa revealed: "I made a vow to God, binding under [pain of] mortal sin, to give to God anything that He may ask, 'Not to refuse Him anything'"¹¹⁰. This vow contains no promise to do a specific thing; but simply a willing disposition to do whatever God wants. It is definitely at variance with the fourth vow which is specific about wholehearted service to the poor. How can these disparities be harmonized? No scholar so far appears to have made attempts at resolving this dilemma.

As a way out of the impasse, we suggest that "to give to God anything that He may ask" and "wholehearted free service to the poor" should not be seen as two separate vows, but as one vow in two different stages of development. At the first stage, even though she was already a finally professed religious, Mother Teresa seemed unsure of what God wanted of her; yet she was enthusiastic to do his will. This is evident in the private vow she took which in effect is a structure with no content, like an open cheque. By the question: "Wilt thou refuse?"¹¹¹, Jesus employed the openness of Mother Teresa at the time she showed signs of hesitation at the invitation to dedicate her life to the service of the poor in the slums. It was like asking her: will you who had promised to give me anything I may ask refuse to take me to the slums? At that very instance, content

¹¹⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 28.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

was being given to her promise. That “anything” that she was ready to do for Jesus had been specified: to dedicate her life to the poorest of the poor. It was for that same reason that she was called to start the congregation of the Missionaries of Charity so that together with her, they may serve the poorest of the poor. We therefore surmise that having known the precise thing God wanted of her, the vow “to give to God anything that He may ask” was reformulated to “wholehearted free service to the poor”. This specified version is what was handed to her followers. On this basis one can understand how it is that the special vow which was taken in 1942 is regarded as a response to a call which came much later.

The vow itself is indicative of how it is to be lived out. “Wholehearted free service to the poor” expresses both the mission and the manner of carrying it out. The people to whom the Missionaries of Charity are called and sent are the poorest of the poor. The details of who these poor people are and how the Missionaries of Charity work among them will be discussed later. The task now is to consider the appropriate disposition to this work among the poor. The words “free” and “wholehearted” say it all. Those who serve the poor under the fourth vow do so for no reward because the poor cannot pay in the first place, and secondly because their aim is not to make money. They are not even to seek gratitude from the poor or anyone else. Mother Teresa regarded such manner of expressing love and compassion as a way of making “reparation for the sins of hatred, coldness, and lack of concern and love for the poor in the world today”¹¹². Mother Teresa also believed that whatever needs to be done should be done with love or it should not be done at all¹¹³, hence, “wholeheartedness” is the spirit of the fourth vow. It demands the person taking the vow to fully understand what it entails and to choose it freely. In other words, it makes appeal to the use of one’s intellect, will and affections.

Now, we need to look beyond the question of origin and of how the fourth vow is lived to the most important question of the spiritual significance of this vow to those who make it. If Mother Teresa insisted that the Missionaries of Charity take this

¹¹² MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 154.

¹¹³ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 154.

additional vow, it was for no reason than that she saw it as a means of spiritual development for the beloved members of her religious family. It brings one closer to God because it is freely taken out of love for God and his people. Again, by living according to this vow, one conforms his or her will perfectly to that of God such that it is God's will that is being done in his or her life. Moreover, those who live this vow allow God's glory to shine through their wholehearted service to the underprivileged. Furthermore, the fourth vow is a means of spiritual development not only for those who profess the vow, but also for the poor for whom they work since they do not only take care of their material needs, but more so of their spiritual needs. Important as Mother Teresa saw this vow, it can be argued whether it is really necessary. If members of other religious congregations have attained sanctity by faithfully observing the three evangelical counsels, can the Missionaries of Charity not do same? Could it be that the introduction of this additional vow was simply Mother Teresa's ego at play? The scope of this work does not permit us to go into the details of these debates. Our task is to show that Mother Teresa considered the fourth vow a means of spiritual development.

One last look back over the four vows reveals that they are all made in obedience to God and out of love for him and neighbour. In that way, living each of them faithfully leads to spiritual growth. Moreover, they are interrelated and ordered one to another. "Sisters," Mother Teresa remarked: "again, I am saying that all the four vows are so complete together that you cannot break one and keep the others"¹¹⁴. Fidelity to one of the vows fosters fidelity to the rest, and demands that one fixes one's eyes on Jesus as an exemplar. The vows engage the intellectual, volitional and affective faculties of the human person thereby demonstrating that spirituality, as Mother Teresa understands it, is founded on anthropology. Another aid to spiritual growth is spiritual direction.

3.4.4. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual direction or guidance has been practiced in the Church since her early beginnings. Biblical precursors to present-day spiritual direction are relationships like the one between Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Barnabas, and Jesus and his apostles. A classic example often referenced in spiritual texts is the story about Jesus and the

¹¹⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 224.

Samaritan woman at the well (Cf. Jn 4:1ff). However, the history of spiritual direction as practised today can be traced to the sporadic movement among desert Fathers and Mothers to whom individuals went in search of spiritual wisdom¹¹⁵. One desert Father, Abba Isaiah, said that beginners in the life of perfection who put themselves under the direction of the holy Fathers were making a good beginning¹¹⁶. Spiritual direction is basically a relationship, usually between two people: a director and a directee, in which the director guides the directee towards Christian perfection. Various attempts at defining this practice have been made. According to William Barry and William Connolly, spiritual direction is “help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with his God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship”¹¹⁷. How does this fit into Mother Teresa’s scheme?

Spiritual direction is in line with Mother Teresa’s view of the human person as a being that comprises the intellect and the will. Her anthropological vision likewise takes into consideration the question of Original Sin because of which the rational faculties are so weakened that finding truth and goodness becomes extremely difficult, with the consequence that the attainment of holiness becomes difficult as well. Man therefore stands in need of assistance in his strive for holiness. Spiritual direction becomes necessary for this reason. As per the above definition, spiritual direction definitely is about union with God or spiritual growth and attests to the fact that God sometimes uses human instruments to draw people to himself. Here, we shall consider how Mother Teresa sees spiritual direction as a means of spiritual growth.

The stance of Mother Teresa on spiritual direction is not obvious from her speeches or instructions to her followers. The book: *Where There Is Love, There Is God* which contains a wide range of topics like the Eucharist, confession, prayers, and the vows does not mention spiritual direction. That a whole anthology of Mother Teresa’s teaching is silent on the topic of spiritual direction is not simply a result of the compiler’s

¹¹⁵ Cf. T. ACKLIN – B. HICKS, *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for Sharing the Father’s Love*, Steubenville 2017, p. xxviii.

¹¹⁶ Cf. ISAIAH in *The Sayings of Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, trans. B. Ward, Kalamazoo 1975, p. 69.

¹¹⁷ W. BARRY – W. CONNOLLY, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, New York 1983, p. 8.

or the editor's choice, but a clear indicator of how little she said on that topic. Are we to conclude therefore that Mother Teresa had no opinion on spiritual direction? Such a conclusion would be a result of a reductionist process that limits what can be known about a person to what she says or writes. But a person's life, taken as a whole, is more revealing than what she says or writes. And when Mother Teresa's life is examined in this holistic way, a lot is known about her understanding of spiritual direction. A lot on this topic is gotten from her private correspondences with her spiritual directors and the archbishop of Calcutta which were made available to the public after her death¹¹⁸.

Mother Teresa teaches about spiritual direction more by her life than by speeches or writings. Her upbringing and formation as a religious built in her the conviction that guidance of some form is necessary. She admits in a letter to Archbishop P erier: "From my childhood I have always been guided by my mother or confessor – now I have so many to guide"¹¹⁹. The guidance referred to is not specified, but given the context of the letter and Mother Teresa's life as a whole, one can assert with a good degree of certainty that the guidance she is alluding to is of a spiritual nature. By disclosing that the would-be Mother Teresa received spiritual guidance in her childhood, this brief statement from a private letter debunks the common misconception that spiritual direction is the reserve of a few. How could that be, given that the divine call to "be holy for, I am holy" (1 Pt 1:16) is addressed to all people irrespective of one's vocation or age? If all then are called to be holy, it follows that spiritual direction whose purpose is to enable growth in holiness is meant for all. What is more, the direction Mother Teresa received at her tender age was not given by some theological expert or spiritual guru, but by her own mother. This mother-to-daughter or parent-to-child guidance opens new possibilities for spiritual direction that may be termed "family spiritual guidance" in which parents function not only as providers or examples to their children, but also as their spiritual directors. This model is not oblivious of the important role parents are playing in the upbringing of their children, but it argues that the already-important role they play will be greatly improved if they see themselves also as spiritual directors to their own children. Parents are hence called to develop the qualities of spiritual directors so that

¹¹⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. x.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 191.

as they direct their children, they too will grow in holiness. This adds honour and lustre to the family spirituality that John Paul II talks about in *Familiaris Consortio*¹²⁰. Mother Teresa who regarded herself as a mother¹²¹ to the members of her religious family played this role of guide to her spiritual children.

Let us now consider how spiritual direction brings about spiritual growth. It should first be noted, though briefly, that no one who does not already desire holiness or spiritual maturity will approach spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is a sign of the desire for holiness, and at the same time it fosters spiritual maturity. We shall focus more on how it fosters holiness. The take off point is Mother Teresa's letter to Fr Céleste Van Exem, one of her spiritual directors, written on 8 August 1948. In the letter, she reveals these words that Jesus supposedly addressed to her: "People think you were sent here to teach, and you do well and doing the work with the whole of your heart, but this was not the aim of My Heart. - I brought you here to be under the immediate care of your spiritual father who will train you in the ways of My love and so prepare you to do My will. Trust him completely and without any fear. Obey him in every detail, you shall not be deceived if you obey for he belongs to Me completely – I shall let you know My will through him"¹²². We may distinguish at least four elements about spiritual direction in these words of Jesus. First is the priority of spiritual direction over work or evangelistic activity. As a Loreto nun, Mother Teresa's main apostolate was in the area of education, but the aim of Christ's heart for her transfer from Asansol to the Entally community in Calcutta was not for her to teach. It was rather that she may be closer to her spiritual director. The priority of spiritual direction, as Jesus explains, comes from the fact that it trains a person in the way of Christ's love and makes her obedient to Christ's will. Doing the will of Christ is what spiritual maturity is all about and it far surpasses any human enterprise. Next, the directee is called to trust the director completely and without any iota of fear. Trust has been recognized in the spiritual tradition of the Church as one of the essential qualities of anyone seeking spiritual direction. This follows from the dictates of common sense that one cannot really follow the direction of someone one

¹²⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, Rome 1981, n. 56.

¹²¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 357.

¹²² *Ibidem*, p. 82.

does not really trust; to open yourself to another person also demands this trust. Spiritual direction takes place in the companionship of a trusted person¹²³.

This “revelation” to Mother Teresa thus ties with what the Church had always thought and hence gives reason for one to believe its authenticity. Furthermore, Mother Teresa is instructed by Christ to obey her spiritual director, not only in big things, but in every detail. The theological argument we put forward to justify why a religious should obey his/her superior equally applies in the practice of spiritual direction. The director stands in the place of God, and so obedience to him is ultimately obedience to God. Christ’s words: “Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me [...]” (Lk 10:16), are also applicable to spiritual directors. Obedience to the director also seems to follow from common sense since it would be futile to seek the direction of someone whose instructions you do not follow. However, Christ’s instruction to Mother Teresa is not only based on common sense. He knows something personal about her spiritual director: that he belongs completely to Christ. For that reason, Mother Teresa will not be deceived if she obeys him. In other words, Mother Teresa’s director is capable of directing her unerringly because he himself belongs to Christ. Echoing the *Nemo Dat Rule*¹²⁴, it can then be said that for a spiritual director to be effective in his work of directing souls, he needs to be in communion with Christ. It is from the abundance of this union that one draws the wisdom with which to guide others. Finally, Christ tells Mother Teresa that he shall let her know his will through the spiritual director. If holiness of life consists in aligning one’s will to God’s own will and the will of God is revealed through the spiritual director, then it goes without saying that spiritual direction enables one to be holy since it helps her to know and do the will of God. Put together, all these points argue that spiritual direction is a means to spiritual maturity since it makes one to be holy by knowing and doing God’s will.

¹²³ Cf. H. NOUWEN – M. CHRISTENSEN – R. LAIRD, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith*, San Francisco 2015, p. 25-26.

¹²⁴ The *Nemo Dat Rule* is a legal principle which states that a person who does not have adequate ownership of goods or property cannot transfer the ownership of those goods or that property to someone else. It is drawn from the Latin phrase “*Nemo dat quod non habet*” which means “No one can give what he/she does not have”. It is applied in several areas in life. Cf. M. MAKELA, *The Nemo Dat Rule* in, <https://www.armstronglegal.com.au/commercial-law/the-nemo-dat-rule/>, [accessed 25/05/2022].

3.5. THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

At this juncture, it seems fitting to consider the effectiveness of the way of life or spirituality established by Mother Teresa. Since the goal of Christian spirituality is union with God, the effectiveness of any way of life that identifies itself as Christian can be gauged from its ability to draw those who follow it closer to God. The life of Mother Teresa herself shall be used as a case study here and the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity shall be the parameters since they have “the one and Triune God for their origin, motive, and object”¹²⁵. Moreover, the theological virtues animate and give Christian moral activity its special character¹²⁶. Although they are infused by God, they need human cooperation, and growth in them shows how open one is to receiving them. It is for this reason that we shall look at Mother Teresa to see how the way of life she adopted disposed her to growing in these virtues.

3.5.1. FAITH

In order to investigate the possible impact of the style of life or spirituality of Mother Teresa on the theological virtue of faith, this section examines her own life. This is for the simple reason that if her way of life helped her to grow in faith, it will likely help the faith of any other person who tries to follow it. Her life will be considered in two phases. The first phase begins from her childhood till she left Loreto to found a new religious order. The strength of her faith at this stage appears obvious. And this for a number of reasons: she reports that she felt intense love for Jesus and neighbour when she receive first Holy Communion at the age of five and a half; she ventured to leave their home for missionary work in Bengal at a time when missionaries who went to missions hardly returned home¹²⁷; sisters with whom she lived in the various communities testified to her good comportment which could be attributed to her personal faith¹²⁸.

The abandonment of her homeland for a mission territory that is putatively read by Mother Teresa’s admirers as a sign of strong and generous faith, is given a different

¹²⁵ CCC, n. 1812.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, n. 1813.

¹²⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 13-14.

¹²⁸ Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 35.

interpretation by Aroup Chatterjee. According to this Calcutta-born who accuses Mother Teresa of giving his city a bad reputation, it was ultimately the struggle for survival that brought this nun to Calcutta. He writes: “Mother Teresa was an ethnic Albanian from the Balkan city of Skopje. Her family had always lived with instability being Catholics in a Muslim majority area. She, like many Catholic women of the region, became a nun, partly to escape poverty and persecution”¹²⁹. Since it is not legitimate to credit someone escaping from poverty and persecution by that very fact for faith, it is necessary to closely examine this accusation. Chatterjee is certainly right that as ethnic Albanians the family of Mother Teresa lived in a precarious situation in the Skopje of her days. Those who suspect that Mother Teresa’s father was poisoned think that he was killed¹³⁰ because of his active involvement in the movement for Albanian nationalism. Chatterjee is equally right that Catholics were a minority in the Muslim dominated city of Skopje. Consequently, Christians suffered some deprivations and bouts of persecutions. Belonging both to an ethnic and a religious minority made the situation of Mother Teresa’s family more vulnerable to attack¹³¹. Admittedly, conditions like these could make a person want to escape. But even with that, a convincing argument (which Chatterjee does not give) is still needed to prove that that was the reason for which Mother Teresa became a nun. A consideration of counter arguments to Chatterjee’s claim will present a more objective view of the situation.

First of all, it is not true to say that Mother Teresa was from a poor family. Her father was a merchant who had his own company and her family had a comfortable life¹³². Mother Teresa’s family was one of the richest in the city. Even after the death of her father, her Mother opened a shop and the business put the family in good financial situation¹³³. Again, the future Mother Teresa already had dreams of serving the poor before she was old enough to properly understand the economic, religious or political situation of her family¹³⁴. Moreover, if Mother Teresa’s aim was to escape poverty and persecution it is unlikely that she would have accepted to go to Calcutta whose economic

¹²⁹ A. CHATTERJEE, *Mother Teresa: The Untold Story*, New Delhi 2016, p. 98-99.

¹³⁰ Cf. A. CHIDIAC, *The Spirituality of Mother Teresa*, , p. 470.

¹³¹ Cf. I. MURZAKU, *Mother Teresa*, p. 19-20.

¹³² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 138.

¹³³ Cf. C. GRAY, *Mother Teresa*, Burn Hill 1990, p. 7-9.

¹³⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 9.

and religious stability was no better than that of Skopje. Even if Mother Teresa had become a religious for those ulterior motives and had accepted to go to Calcutta, she would have most probably remained with the Loreto sisters where she was fairly comfortable and safe. But on the contrary, she went the extra mile, while in Calcutta, of leaving Loreto and risked even her own vocation to live an Indian life with and among the poorest of the poor¹³⁵. This is not what someone whose goal is to escape poverty and persecution would do. Putting all these arguments together, one is inclined to the conclusion that faith, love of God and neighbour were truly the motives for which Mother Teresa became a nun. Having said this, let us now proceed to examine the second phase of Mother Teresa's life.

This second phase is the time from when she founded the Missionaries of Charity till her death. Judging from external activities, it could again be said that Mother Teresa was a woman of great faith. She went begging in order to take care of the destitute. Her general comportment, charitable works, and the zeal and assiduity that characterised her daily activities were naturally attributed to a profound faith. One senior Missionaries of Charity sister remarked: "Mother's deep, deep reverence for the Blessed Sacrament was a sign of her profound faith in the Real Presence of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine"¹³⁶. Other people, as Mother Teresa herself admits, testified that they were drawn closer to God because they perceived her strong faith¹³⁷. Apart from a few critics, she was indeed acclaimed a great saint, the Christian Mahatma¹³⁸. The public opinion about Mother Teresa is fairly expressed in the following words of Mary Poplin: "Mother Teresa was like a prophet crying in the wilderness revealing all at once my poverty, my wretchedness and my possibilities [...] To see her and the Missionaries serving the poor and living among them simultaneously shatters our indifference to God and humanity, critiques our privilege and disturbs our comfort"¹³⁹.

¹³⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 48.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 213.

¹³⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 238.

¹³⁸ Cf. C. ZALESKI, *The Dark Night of Mother Teresa*, "First Things" 133 (2003), [24-24], p. 24.

¹³⁹ M. POPLIN, *Finding Calcutta: What Mother Teresa Taught Me about Meaningful Word and Service*, Downers Grove 2008, p. 16.

However, the publication in 2007 of her private correspondences with her spiritual directors, confessors and the archbishop of Calcutta stirred controversy about her faith with suggestions from some quarters that she was an atheist or unbeliever¹⁴⁰. An excerpt from one of such letters which Mother Teresa had addressed to Bishop Picachy¹⁴¹ reads: “People say they are drawn closer to God – seeing my strong faith. – Is this not deceiving people? Every time I have wanted to tell the truth – ‘that I have no faith’ – the words just do not come – my mouth remains closed. – And yet I still keep on smiling at God and all”¹⁴². The contrast between what people observed whenever they meet Mother Teresa and what Mother Teresa felt deep within herself is the main feature of the second phase of her life. She was seen as a woman of strong faith, but she felt she had no faith. It could be concluded from some statements she made during this period that she was an unbeliever. One of her detractors cited by Taylor Williams did in fact describes her as “a confused old lady who [...] had for all practical purposes ceased to believe”¹⁴³. If Mother Teresa was indeed an unbeliever, then she was equally a fraud since she put on an appearance that did not reflect what was within her.

In any case, the above citation from her letter contains a statement that warns against a rush to the conclusion that she ceased to believe. After the declaration that she has no faith Mother Teresa herself says: “And yet I still keep on smiling at God and all”. The word “yet” in this sentence serves a grammatical role of a conjunctive which means “in spite of what preceded”. In effect, what she means is that in spite of the claim that she has no faith, she still smiles at God and all people. This leaves room for two possible interpretations: either Mother Teresa is insane to smile at a God whose existence she does not believe or if she does believe that there is a God to be smiled at, then the “lack of faith” she talks about cannot qualify as atheism understood as “the belief that there is no God or gods”¹⁴⁴. There is negligible reason to think that Mother Teresa was insane¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. R. DAVIES, *Poverty and Interiority in Mother Teresa*, “Theological Studies” 80 (2019), p. 968.

¹⁴¹ As a priest, Picachy was one of Mother Teresa’s confessors, then he became a bishop. Mother Teresa kept contact with him. This particular letter was sent to him when he was already a bishop.

¹⁴² MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 238.

¹⁴³ T. WILLIAMS, *Illness Narrative, Depression, and Sainthood: An Analysis of the Writings of Mother Teresa*, “Journal of Religion and Health” 53(2014), p. 291.

¹⁴⁴ J. BAGGINI, *Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2003, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Some people point to the possibility that Mother Teresa’s internal emotional state at the time she wrote these letters could have been a medical depression whose narrative was placed in a spiritual context. But arguments for this are too weak to be convincing. In an article published in 2014 for example, Taylor Williams compares the

Some of her letters show proof that when she says she has not faith she is not denying the existence of God. In a letter written on 3 July 1959 to Fr Picachy, Mother Teresa attached words she initially wrote to Jesus¹⁴⁶. It reads: “I do not doubt that it was You [Jesus] who called me, with so much love and force. It was You – I know. That is why the work is Yours and it is You even now – but I have no faith – I don’t believe. – Jesus, don’t let my soul be deceived – nor let me deceive any one”¹⁴⁷. She believes that it was God in Jesus who called her to do the work she was doing for the poor, yet she claims to have no faith. This “lack of faith” needs to be understood in Mother Teresa’s own terms which are rather mystical.

Although she claims lack of faith, she expresses fear that she could be deceived. That is indicative of her uncertainty of what was actually happening. An understanding of the state of her soul at this moment is very essential in determining her faith. The best explanation of what was happening to Mother Teresa is given by her spiritual directors¹⁴⁸. According to one of them, Fr Joseph Neuner, the inner pain, the aridity, the emptiness, the dryness, the desolation, the darkness, and the longing for God who seemed absent were all a sign of the presence of God who was so near that she could

language Mother Teresa uses to describe her situation with that many people use in what is referred to in modern medicine as illness narrative. He concludes: “In the case of Mother Teresa, we will never know if her ‘darkness’ was a medical Depression and might have responded to medication or psychotherapy. We do know that her misery did not respond to pastoral counselling, writing about her feelings, prayer, or staying busy with work”. Cf. T. WILLIAMS, *Illness Narrative, Depression, and Sainthood: An Analysis of the Writings of Mother Teresa*, p. 294. Even with this, he still holds the opinion that she might have been suffering from depression. His only reason is the following: “Should the possibility of a medical depressive disorder have occurred to Mother Teresa’s confessors? Should they have suggested that she seek psychiatric medical care? In the 1950s – 1970s when her darkness manifested, public understanding of mental illness was quite limited, so it is understandably doubtful it would have occurred to them.” Cf. T. WILLIAMS, *Illness Narrative, Depression, and Sainthood: An Analysis of the Writings of Mother Teresa*, p. 295. That public understanding of mental illness was quite limited is no proof that Mother Teresa’s confessors lacked it; they could as well have been among the few who understood it. And even if they did not understand mental illness and did not suggest that she seek psychiatric medical care, that again does not prove that she had a mental illness. All these speculations cannot lead to any certainty. It is thus better to consider how those who interacted with her physically and listened to her understood the situation. That is the position this work takes.

¹⁴⁶ It was usual for Mother Teresa to write a letter to Jesus as to a friend. This is one of such instances.

¹⁴⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 193.

¹⁴⁸ The Church understands spiritual direction to be an important ecclesial service that requires an inner vitality which is implored as a gift from the Holy Spirit in intense and prolonged prayer and with a special training. Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors*, Vatican City 2011, n. 1. The training spiritual directors undergo includes a working knowledge of psychology and counselling. Such training enables them to afford spiritual counsel with greater diligence, discernment and spiritual accompaniment. Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors*, n. 66. It is thanks to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and such special training that the directors are able to discern the workings of God’s grace in a soul as was the case with Mother Teresa.

neither see, hear, nor even taste him¹⁴⁹. That God's closeness to a human being can be felt as an abandonment may sound strange, but it aligns perfectly with what mystics and spiritual writers in the Church's long tradition have often held. According to the 16th century mystic poet, St John of the Cross, in order to bring a soul to divine union, "God divests the faculties, affections, and senses, both spiritual and sensory, interior and exterior. He leaves the intellect in darkness, the will in aridity, the memory in emptiness, and the affections in supreme affliction, bitterness, and anguish by depriving the soul of the feelings and satisfaction it previously obtained from spiritual blessings"¹⁵⁰. This painful experience is to purify the soul and enable it so that unhindered by either the flesh or the devil, it may be united with God. Using regal and nuptial metaphors, St John's female counterpart, St Teresa of Ávila, similarly discusses how a person to whom God is about to give greater favours experiences great interior trials. She affirms: "when one is suffering the trials, it then seems that everything is lost"¹⁵¹. Interpreting Mother Teresa's inner experiences in the light of mystical tradition as articulated by John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila, it is evident that what she called "lack of faith" was not lack of faith as such. She was going through a mystical experience through which one realizes that her faith is nothing compared to the God she desires. Her feeling of abandonment by God is a feeling akin to that of Jesus when he cried out on the Cross in a loud voice: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). The pain, the emptiness and the forsakenness were actually the fire with which God was purifying Mother Teresa and bringing her closer to himself. Her ability to bear God's silence and the darkness of apparent divine absence with equanimity and a broad smile ever on her face is an indicator of how profound her faith had actually grown. Following her experience, faith could be defined as the acceptance of God and the surrender to his will even when his presence is not felt or when he seems to have abandoned the believer. Such faith made Mother Teresa regard sorrow, pain, suffering, failure and loneliness as a kiss of Jesus¹⁵².

¹⁴⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 225.

¹⁵⁰ ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Dark Night*, II, 3.3., trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Washington, D.C. 2017, P. 399.

¹⁵¹ ST. TERESA OF AVILA, *Interior Castle*, VI, 1.3. trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017, P. 360.

¹⁵² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 281, 282.

Since her spirituality nourished her faith to flower and deepen, it is a recommended path for others to follow.

3.5.2. SUPERNATURAL HOPE

Compared to the two other theological virtues of faith and love, supernatural hope is a virtue least spoken of by Mother Teresa. Nevertheless, analyses of her writings and other writings about her show that her way of life or spirituality has brought about a deepening also of her hope. Mother Teresa makes no distinction, in some instances, between hope, faith and trust such that the three words in those instances mean one and the same thing. This is understandable given that although the concepts of faith and hope are distinct, they may not be separated in reality. Does not the Letter to the Hebrews demonstrate the intimate link between the two virtues by defining faith in terms of hope as confidence in what is hoped for (Cf.11:1)?

Also, hope is used in her writings in two senses. In one of the senses, the object of hope is some good which can be provided in this life by God. This kind of hope is evidenced in a letter that the then Agnes Gonxha wrote to the superior general of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary as she prepared to joined that congregation. A portion of it reads: “I have completed the fifth class of high school; of languages I know Albania, which is my mother tongue and Serbian, I know a little French, English I do not know at all, but I hope in the good God that He will help me to learn the little I need and so I am beginning immediately these [days] to practice it”¹⁵³. Although God is the one in whom she hopes for the help to learn English, hope cannot properly be called theological in this case since its object is something other than God himself. Mother Teresa’s entire life is characterized by this type of hope. Her courageous decision to leave Loreto when she had practically nothing, for example, was sustained by the hope that God would provide for her to do the work he had called her to do. Asked by the archbishop of Calcutta how the sisters of the congregation she intended to form would support themselves, she responded that the sisters would not need much cash, they would not need the servants, they would do the house work, and that she trusted God for

¹⁵³ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 15.

the rest¹⁵⁴. This might sound reckless, but that is where Mother Teresa's hope led her. She trusted God when she had nothing to depend on.

Besides this understanding, evidence of hope as a properly theological virtue abounds in Mother Teresa. When some Hindus threatened to kill her and her companions in the early days of Nirmal Hriday, Mother Teresa responded simply: "If you kill us, we would only hope to reach God sooner"¹⁵⁵. A human being naturally runs away from anything that puts his life at risk especially when he is defenceless as were Mother Teresa and her companions. What prompted them to stand their ground despite their vulnerability can thus be said, with little fear of contradiction, to have been something supernatural – a gift of God. Moreover, what they hoped to achieve, had they been killed, is nothing other than God himself. Theirs was a hope based on the understanding that God is everything, and in the light of that truth everything outside God, their own lives included, counted as nothing. This kind of hope is called theological since it is a gift of God and its object is God.

Mother Teresa's spirituality help strengthened the virtue of hope in her understood in both senses. When she was in need of anything, she turned to God in hope trusting that he would help her out¹⁵⁶; and even when she felt abandoned by God, she trusted that all will end in heaven with Jesus¹⁵⁷. Because the Teresan way of life helped the growth of her hope, it is highly probably that it will also help anybody following it to grow in love.

3.5.3. CHARITY OR CHRISTIAN LOVE

Love is obviously one of the major biblical themes. Many scriptural passages talk about love of God and neighbour (Cf. Dt 6:5; Lv 19:18; Lk 10:27; 1 Cor 13:1-13). Christ intended it to be the distinguishing feature of his followers when he told the disciples: "It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciples" (Jn 13:34). Love, however, is a complex reality with different shades of meaning. To explain it, the ancient Greeks distinguished three kinds: *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁵ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 178.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 184.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 187.

Christian theology has attempted to understand love following these divisions. Although *agape* appears rather infrequent in Greek usage, Pope Benedict XVI indicates that it is the word that typically expresses the biblical notion of love: “this word [*agape*] expresses the experience of love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character [...] Love now becomes concern and care for the other [...] it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice”¹⁵⁸. Understanding love following Greek ranking was, of course, common among the Greek Fathers of the Church. The Latin Fathers also classified love using terms such as *dilectio*, *amor* and *caritas*¹⁵⁹. Of these three, *caritas* is identified with Christian love and is translated into English as “charity”. It consists in wishing the good of the beloved, and it is an affair of the will¹⁶⁰, not of emotions. *Caritas*, therefore, meant to the Latin world what *agape* meant to the Greek world. Each of these two terms expresses the Christian notion of love. For that reason, they are not to be seen as distinct, but identical. Servais Pinckaers corroborates this claim in his assertion that “Charity or *agape* is new and unique, a love that surpasses all human sentiments. Its source is God: it is the love of the Father manifested in the gift of the Son and communicated by the Holy Spirit ”¹⁶¹. The purpose of this section is to examine how Mother Teresa assimilated and made use of this Christian understanding of love.

Mother Teresa is widely known for her belief that the human being is created to love and be loved¹⁶². What she means by “love” agrees significantly with the Christian concept of love as seen above since she understands it as giving¹⁶³. This takes into consideration the intention of the giver. On account of the fact that varied reasons, even selfish ones may prompt a person to give, Mother Teresa states that “Love is a one-way street. It always moves away from self in the direction of the other”¹⁶⁴. In other words, giving is regarded as love only when the giver gives selflessly for the sole purpose of

¹⁵⁸ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, Rome 2005, n. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. S. PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. M. Thomas, Washington, D.C. 1995, P. 27.

¹⁶⁰ C. LEWIS, *Mere Christianity*, London 2016, p. 132.

¹⁶¹ S. PINCKAERS, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, P. 122.

¹⁶² Cf. Mother Teresa, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹⁶³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 26.

benefitting the receiver; and not for some ulterior motives. St Teresa of Ávila says in similar fashion that the souls who truly love are more inclined to give than to receive¹⁶⁵.

Thus understood, love may be distinguished, depending on whether God or the human person is the giver, into two types: divine and human love. Mother Teresa draws illustrations from the Bible to show how God gave his only Son for the salvation of the world. The Incarnation is understood from this perspective as an act of divine love. The divine Son in turn manifests his own personal love by emptying himself to assume human nature (Cf. Phil 2:7); and then by giving himself on the Cross for us¹⁶⁶. Jesus is a concrete expression of divine love. Divine love thus stands as the paradigm of giving solely for the good of the receiver or of true love. Mother Teresa points to it as a model to her followers in these words: “God loved the world so much, loved you, loved me so much that He gave His life. And He wants us to love as He loved. And so now we have also to give until it hurts. True love is giving and giving until it hurts”¹⁶⁷. God’s love is the most profound kind of love because what he gives is not something or some service, but his very self. Because God gives nothing less than his own self to those who are undeserving, St Bernard of Clairvaux holds that God merits our love¹⁶⁸. God’s love is *agape* or *caritas* in the fullest sense of the word.

Mother Teresa is thus right in pointing to divine love as the ideal to which human love should aspire. But it needs also to be said that understanding God’s love in terms of what he does for the world, as Mother Teresa does in this case, is incomplete. It can even cause the diminishment of charity to simply mean “alms” – giving to the poor. C.S. Lewis admits that giving to the poor is the most obvious thing that a man who has charity does, but he points out that charity has a much wider meaning¹⁶⁹. So too God’s love is wider than what he does for the world, than divine economy. In fact, the declaration in the first letter of John that “God is love” (4:8) touches primarily not on God’s activity, but on his being. St Augustine of Hippo explains it as follows: “For God is Father and

¹⁶⁵ ST. TERESA OF AVILA, *The Way of Perfection*, 6, 7, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017, P. 64.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. M. BURROWS, *Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) On Loving God*, in: A. HOLDER (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*, Abingdon 2010, p. 88.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. C. LEWIS, *Mere Christianity*, p. 129.

Son and Holy Ghost: the Son, God of God, the Holy Ghost, God of God; and these three, one God, not three Gods. If the Son be God, and the Holy Ghost God, and that person loves in whom dwells the Holy Ghost: therefore ‘love is God;’ ... let us understand that He who subsists in love is the Holy Ghost”.¹⁷⁰ God who is a communion of three persons who love each other is therefore love in himself. God’s giving of himself or his activities in general are secondary. Mother Teresa fails to bring out this important dimension of divine love in her writings; either she did not understand it or she simply omitted it.

As already indicated, Mother Teresa talks of divine love more as an example for human beings to emulate. This alludes to human love. It is the love human beings have for God and for one another. Love assumes the status of a theological virtue when it comes from God and leads back to God. As was the case when discussing about the theological virtues of faith and hope, it shall also be examined here whether Mother Teresa’s spirituality fosters a person’s growth in this virtue of love. We begin with a consideration of the relationship between love and faith.

Mother Teresa opines that there is a causal relationship between love and faith in the simple assertion that “the fruit of faith is love”¹⁷¹. It is obvious that faith is prior to love since one cannot love God unless one believes at least that he exists. But to have faith is more than a simple belief in God’s existence. Mother Teresa’s own experience shows that faith entails commitment in a personal relationship with God, and the capacity to bear the disturbing feeling of his silence¹⁷². It is such belief that God is there and that he loves even when one does not feel his presence that produces love as its fruit. Man’s love for God is here understood as a response to God’s own love for man. The human being loves God because God first loved him. Now, given the relationship of direct proportionality between love and faith, it is reasonable to say that Mother Teresa’s spirituality brings about increase in love since it was already established that it enhances growth in faith.

¹⁷⁰ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, 7, 6., in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1702.htm>, [accessed 03/06/2022].

¹⁷¹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 16.

¹⁷² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 250.

Far from mere conjectures, Mother Teresa's dominant desire was to love God as he has never been loved before¹⁷³. But since no one has ever seen God (Cf. Jn 1:18), concrete expression of love for God are done to one's neighbour, especially the needy. Charity to the needy especially the poorest of the poor is the vocation of the religious family that has Mother Teresa for its foundress. No wonder they are called Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa argues that since love consists in giving and one cannot give unless someone else is in need, the poor people give us more than we give them since they give us an opportunity to love God in them¹⁷⁴. For this, she persisted in her charitable activities even when it became too demanding. Once she told her sisters: "When we stop giving we stop loving, when we stop loving we stop growing, and unless we grow we will never attain personal fulfilment; we will never open out to receive the life of God. It is through love that we encounter God"¹⁷⁵. An act of charity performed with the right intention benefits the receiver and the giver alike. While relieving the receiver of his pain, it leads the giver to union with God, "a union not based on words or desires alone, but a union proved by deeds"¹⁷⁶. Because Mother Teresa's spirituality centres around charity, it can be said to promote love.

3.6. CHARACTERISTICS OF TERESAN SPIRITUALITY

It may be asked what immediately comes to mind when mention is made of the spirituality of Mother Teresa. Knowledge of the characteristic features of a school of spirituality is necessary for a proper understanding of that spirituality. This research has revealed certain prominent features of the spirituality of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. This section highlights some of these characteristics that make her spirituality stand out.

3.6.1. THE FAMILY AS A MATRIX OF EDUCATION IN SPIRITUALITY

Something curious about the spirituality of Mother Teresa is the much attention it gives to marriage and family life. Why should a way of life meant primarily for religious women and men who take the vow of celibacy be so particular about life in the

¹⁷³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 168.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁶ ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA, *Meditations on the Song of Songs*, 3, 1, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017, P. 236.

family? Mother Teresa would answer that loving until it hurts is not a prerogative of religious. She believed that every person is called to be a carrier of God's love, and by that token is somehow a missionary of charity¹⁷⁷. That is the reason behind the Association of Co-Workers of Mother Teresa which encourages lay people who wish to share in some way in the work of loving service to the poorest of the poor to identify and serve the poor beginning from their own families¹⁷⁸. Moreover, members of the Missionaries of Charity congregation do not come from nowhere. They all come from families. The future of the Church and the society is reflected in the kind of formation children receive at home. Therefore, concern for the well-being of the family is already a remote preparation for vocations to the religious life and indeed to any other way of life. Cognizance of this vital role of the family made Mother Teresa's friend, Pope John Paul II, describe the family as "the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations to a life of consecration to the Kingdom of God"¹⁷⁹. Furthermore, Mother Teresa herself realized that many social problems such as homelessness, addiction, prostitution, feeling unwanted result from lack of love within families. "Today we see more and more that all the suffering in the world has started from the home. Today we have not time even to look at each other, to talk to each other, to enjoy each other, and still less to be what our children expect of us, what the husband expects from the wife, what the wife expects from the husband. And so more and more we are out of [our] homes and less and less we are in touch with each other"¹⁸⁰. The efforts to bring love to families is thus seen as an integral part of the work of the Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa's theology of the family takes its inspiration from the oneness of the persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and the oneness and unity of the Holy Family of Nazareth: Jesus, Mary and Joseph¹⁸¹. An expectation for this theology to be developed in a detailed way meets with disappointment. Mother Teresa evidently presumes the knowledge of her audience and simply cites the Trinity and the Holy Family as models for families to look up to without any profound

¹⁷⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. xi.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Our Co-Workers*, in <https://missionariesofcharity.org/our-co-workers.html>, [assesse 16/05/2022].

¹⁷⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, Rome 1981, n. 53.

¹⁸⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 100.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 277.

elaboration. However, her message centres around the themes of love, availability and prayer. As love unites the persons of the Trinity, and the members of the Holy Family lived according to that love, Mother Teresa exhorts that love should bind together members of a family – a woman with her husband, children with their parents, siblings with each other. Love, it must be born in mind, is giving to the point that it hurts. Its other name is availability, for when a person truly loves, he makes time to be there for the beloved. In Mother Teresa’s estimation, availability is one of the virtues family life today is in dire need of. It entails the time just to look at each other, to talk to each other, to smile at each other, to enjoy each other¹⁸². Availability makes a man a good husband and father; it makes a woman a good wife and mother. Since family members cannot achieve unity on their own efforts alone, they too are called upon to pray. Kathryn Spink states that the sayings: “love begins at home” and “the family that prays together lives together” were not mere clichés for Mother Teresa¹⁸³. She saw them as true principles of family life. Established on love, availability, and prayer, a family shields itself against vices such as divorce, and prepares children to take their place in the society by providing them with a sense of identity, peace, trust, openness and joy¹⁸⁴. It is for this that Mother Teresa regards the family as a matrix or a domestic school where children first learn spiritual values.

3.6.2. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

One noticeable feature of the way of life advocated for by Mother Teresa is respect for human life in any condition and in all the stages of its development from conception till death (natural termination). This style of life gives preference to the most vulnerable members of the human family whom Mother Teresa calls the poorest of the poor. The reason is that if every human person stands in need of protection, then those who cannot defend themselves need special attention. The unborn children, in Mother Teresa’s view, belong to the category of needy persons and are even the most delicate since some people do not yet consider them as humans¹⁸⁵. In the *Missionaries of Charity*

¹⁸² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 100.

¹⁸³ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 134.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 68.

¹⁸⁵ On Friday, 24 June 2022, photos of a woman who looked to be about 7 or 8 months pregnant with a writing on her belly which read: “Not yet a human” went viral on social media. She was one among the many people

tradition, love and concern for the child tantamount to reception of Jesus who says: “Anyone who welcomes a little child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me” (Mk 9:37). Although “the child” that Jesus refers to in this Gospel passage is most probably a toddler, Mother Teresa gives the text a holistic interpretation to include even the unborn. In this light, abortion has got not only moral and social implications, but also spiritual ones. It is a refusal to receive Jesus¹⁸⁶. And what is spirituality without Jesus? Hence, when Mother Teresa opposes abortion it is not only to save the physical life of the unborn child; but also to rescue the parent from spiritual death, from cutting herself from Christ.

Mother Teresa’s is a spirituality that is eminently pro-life. It stands against abortion as well as a myriad of other life threatening and disrespecting practices like contraception and euthanasia. Mother Teresa referred to abortion in many instances as fear of the unborn child¹⁸⁷. This is argued from common knowledge that feeding and educating a child demands money. An increase in the number of children in a family without a corresponding increase in family income implies a reduction in the good and services the family can afford for each of its members. Consequently, some people suppose that there is a choice between keeping a pregnancy and aborting; and the fear of living below a certain standard makes them opt for abortion. This is the reason why Mother Teresa believed that abortion is fear of the unborn child¹⁸⁸. It results from the fear of the consequences of welcoming one more child. It must also be said that other reasons exist why people commit abortion. Mother Teresa’s aim, however, was not to enumerate those reason, but to denounce the wilful killing of unborn children by their own parents.

Her vehement condemnation of abortion, contraception and other anti-life practices has attracted many criticisms. Due to the way of life of the Missionaries of

protesting against the U.S.A. supreme court ruling that overturned Roe V. Wade, a 1973 ruling of the same supreme court that permitted abortions during the first trimesters of pregnancy in the United States of America. This graphically demonstrates the attempt to deny the unborn their humanity. Cf. C. OWENS, *5 Reasons I am No Longer Pro-Choice*, in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-gRm92ZDno>, 3:12 [accessed 28/06/2022]

¹⁸⁶ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 98.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹⁸⁸ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

Charity that stands against artificial family planning (contraception and abortion), Hemley Gonzalez claims that Mother Teresa was not a friend of the poor but rather a promoter of poverty¹⁸⁹. This is too serious an accusation to be taken lightly especially as it is made against someone reputed as a friend of the poor. The accusation clearly betrays both a materialistic worldview for which reality is limited to things material, and a consumerist one which is the belief that it is good for a society or an individual person to buy and use a large quantity of goods and services¹⁹⁰. With maximum consumption as the highest good, anything that stands against it such as an increase in the number of children is seen as an evil to be combated. Contraception and abortion are thus encouraged as effective means of maintaining or reducing the family size. It is no surprise that people with such an outlook of life clash with Missionaries of Charity. According to the MC spirituality, spiritual values such as respect for human life hold pride of place over money, possessions and physical comforts. Thus, while the materially minded think that a pregnant woman has a choice between keeping the pregnancy and aborting, followers of Mother Teresa's spirituality maintain that abortion is never an option. While admitting the hardships some people go through as a result of large family sizes, it advocates methods of birth regulation like natural family planning that respect the dignity of human life and does not usurp God's power. The issue at stake here is an understanding of the human person and when human life actually begins. Those who see no spiritual value of the human person have no qualms with abortion.

Beyond concerns for the unborn, respect for human life, in Mother Teresa's view also includes the dying. Against a culture that evaluates the human person on the basis of his performance, she affirms that human dignity and value lie rather in a person's being. Thus she would welcome into her Nirmal Hriday (home for the dying) the beggar picked up from the streets and the dying man refused admittance to a hospital¹⁹¹. To those driven by material profit, this may seem a waste of resources and time that would have been used more "profitably", but for Mother Teresa, anything used for a human being, even someone dying, is never wasted. She had learned from the death of her own

¹⁸⁹ Cf. M. KUHLENBECK, *The Humanist Interview with Hemley Gonzalez*, "Humanist" 74 (2014), p. 28.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. D. LEA et al (ed.), *Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English*, Oxford 2014, p. 164, 501.

¹⁹¹ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 55.

father how crucial the moment of death is in the life of a person. The dying, therefore, deserve all it takes to die with dignity. Kathryn Spink relates, in reference to the work of the Missionaries of Charity in the home for the dying, that “those who were beyond treatment were given the opportunity to die with dignity, having received the rituals of their faith [...]”¹⁹². Dying with dignity means for Mother Teresa that the dying person dies feeling accepted and loved¹⁹³, and having received the last rites as prescribed by his/her religion. The last rites were particularly important for Mother Teresa because she perceived the dying as people on the way to heaven¹⁹⁴ who need adequate preparation. Since respect for the human person also includes respect for a person’s right to religion, Mother Teresa allowed the dying whom she and her sisters attended to be administered the last rites according to their various religions. This her attitude accords with the teaching of the second Vatican Council which, while holding firm to the Church’s belief that the one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, declares nevertheless that the human person has a right to religious freedom such that no one is to be forced to act in a way contrary to his beliefs whether privately or publicly¹⁹⁵. Now, we shall turn our attention to one of the core elements of Mother Teresa’s spirituality – the idea that the human being is Christ in disguise. We will find there a deeper reason why she strongly advocates for the respect of the human being.

3.6.2. THE HUMAN BEING AS “CHRIST IN DISGUISE”

Mother Teresa’s understanding of the human being as “Christ in disguise” is the reason for her repeated declaration that she was not a social worker, a declaration that has remained a surprise to some people till today. How could a woman who became so famous precisely because of humanitarian¹⁹⁶ works deny being a social worker? Like

¹⁹² K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 55

¹⁹³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹⁹⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, *Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae*, 2.

¹⁹⁶ Humanitarianism is a belief in improving people’s lives and reducing suffering. Cf. D. LEA et al (ed.), *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of Academic English*, Oxford 2014, p. 396. Variants of humanitarianism differ one from another according to the thoughts and doctrines behind actions that seek to promote human wellbeing. People who do not believe in God seek to improve the lives of people who are suffering for sheer love of humanity; but as a Christian, Mother Teresa dedicated herself to work for the betterment of the poor and suffering because she believed that she was serving Christ in them. Not to be confused with “humanitarianism” is the term “humanism” which represents more a philosophical position. While it is traceable to the maxim of Protagoras that man is the measure of all things, “humanism” was stimulated in the period of the Renaissance by the discovery of classical

their foundress, Missionaries of Charity also insists that they are not social workers. Unable to understand this claim H. Gonzalez wonders: “So under what motives do they tend to the poor you may ask?”¹⁹⁷. This question touches directly on the spirituality of Mother Teresa. Gonzalez rightly realizes that the services Missionaries of Charity render to the poor are materially similar to those of other humanitarian organizations. What he fails to capture, however, is their spirit, the fundamental principle underpinning their services to the poorest of the poor. Whereas social workers may engage in humanitarian works out of mere pity for suffering humanity or in order to make some gain, serving man, according to Missionaries of Charity, is ultimately an act of love for God. They render their services because they realize that in each human being Christ himself is present¹⁹⁸. They serve the poor because they love Christ.

Coming from Christ himself who declared that whatsoever is done to the least of his brethren is done to him (Cf. Mt 25), the idea of Christ’s presence in each human being especially the poor has been a constant theme in Christian spirituality. The Fathers of the Church gave serious consideration to that topic. St John Chrysostom says that hunger, cold, nakedness, sickness and to wonder everywhere houseless are sufficient to destroy enmity. He then argues that he who fails to assist a poor person deserves punishment because he fails not only to assist someone in need, but to help someone who is at once a friend, a benefactor and Lord¹⁹⁹. If failure to come to the aid of a fellow human being is failure to help Jesus our friend, benefactor, and Lord as John Chrysostom asserts, it follows that he believes in some form of the presence of Jesus in human beings. Love of God as an inspiration for love of neighbour has been the foundation of the charitable works of many great saints who served the poor²⁰⁰. In the 20th century this found special expression in Mother Teresa who realized the supernatural reality of God’s presence in each human being. Without this distinctive understanding of the

Greek and Roman literature that promoted human ideals involving features such as unity between humans and nature, a confidence in the power of human understanding, the ability to enjoy the pleasures of life. It gave rise to an education programme aimed at liberating thought from tradition and authority.

Cf. N. BUNNIN – J. YU, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Malden 2004, p. 313.

¹⁹⁷ M. KUHLENBECK, *The Humanist Interview with Hemley Gonzalez*, p. 28.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 114.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of St Matthew*, 79, 2. in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

²⁰⁰ Cf. R. SARAH, *The Day is Now Far Spent*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2019, p. 40.

human person, the hope of understanding Mother Teresa and her disciples is nil. Her services to suffering humanity were carried out based on confidence in divine providence.

3.6.3. RELIANCE ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Another fundamental pillar of the spirituality of Mother Teresa is reliance on Divine Providence. It formed the mainspring of her own spiritual life, and the key-note of the instructions she gave to her sisters. By Divine Providence Mother Teresa means the pious and absolute trust that God will provide what is needed when it is needed²⁰¹. This liberates a person from unnecessary anxieties about the future and give her the freedom to concentrate on what has to be done here and now. Mother Teresa's understanding agrees in the essentials with what spiritual masters have taught about Divine Providence. It was St Augustine's conviction that creatures subsist of the plenitude of God's goodness²⁰². For Jean-Pierre de Caussade, Divine Providence entails giving our sole confidence entirely to God without sharing an atom of it with anyone, whoever it might be²⁰³. This complete confidence in God is justified by the belief that he cares. Divine Providence thus diametrically opposes the deistic conception of God which denies that God exercises providential care of man or the universe²⁰⁴. Surrender to Divine Providence calls for faith in a God who did not abandon the world after creation, but continues to hold it in being and to provide for it. As St Thomas Aquinas says: "God has immediate providence over everything, because He has in His intellect the types of everything, even the smallest"²⁰⁵.

Loving trust and total surrender to God is the spirit that characterizes or should characterize the Missionaries of Charity. This spirit made Mother Teresa appear foolhardy when considered from a purely human perspective. She reportedly declined, for instance, an offer made by the archbishop of New York, Cardinal Cooke, of five hundred dollars a month for each sister working in Harlem, asking the Cardinal whether

²⁰¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 152.

²⁰² Cf. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *The Confessions*, Bk XIII, 2,2., in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

²⁰³ J.P. DE CAUSSADE, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, trans. Dom Arnold, Grand Rapids 1921, p. 316.

²⁰⁴ Cf. T. O'BRIEN (ed.), *Corpus Dictionary of the Western Churches*, P. 258.

²⁰⁵ Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 22, a.3., in: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

he thought that God was going to be bankrupt in New York²⁰⁶. Is that not being unthinkingly reckless; would the sisters not have used the money for their mission to the poorest of the poor? The otherwise irresponsible or foolish decision to turn down the Cardinal's offer was for Mother Teresa a way of maintaining the spirit of her congregation. Missionaries of Charity were founded with the intention of having religious who will not give to the poor from their abundance, but who will be poor with the poor. Hence, a regular income is a threat to this spirit of poverty. Since Mother Teresa wanted the work of the sisters to remain a work of love and not become a business, she declined the offer.

Again, their spirituality is a spirituality that might be described as the spirituality of small things. It is inspired by "the science of love", a principle Mother Teresa borrowed from St Thérèse of Lisieux, according to which the merit of an act derives from how much love is put into it rather than the size of the act²⁰⁷. Missionaries of Charity seek to give to the poor not something materially big, but little things done with love such as a simple smile, a loaf of bread, a cup of water, a home to live in. Sisters do not need a salary in order to carry out such little acts. For them, "It is sufficient to be and to love. Of utmost importance is to love with all that we are, with all that we have, and to do so without feeling discouraged or defeated"²⁰⁸. Further, a sure source of income is not so favourable for the spiritual life of the sisters since it may tempt them to shift their trust from God to wealth. what is worse is that "burdened with riches and luxuries, the human heart tends to close itself to the reality of suffering and become blind to others' needs"²⁰⁹. Nothing could be more detrimental to the spirituality of Mother Teresa than insensitivity to the sufferings of the people around. Over and above all, Mother Teresa never lost sight of the fact that the work is God's work and not theirs²¹⁰. She and her sisters are simply instruments of love in God's hand. Rather than fret over concerns about a tomorrow which may not come, theirs is to concentrate in doing what has to be done now. She firmly trusted that if God wants them to do anything,

²⁰⁶ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 219.

²⁰⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 328.

²⁰⁸ J. GAUTHIER, *I Thirst: St Therese and Mother Teresa*, p. 13.

²⁰⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 152.

²¹⁰ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 15.

he will provide the necessary funds to do that thing when the time comes²¹¹. Surrender to Divine Providence thus accounts for this way of life that is so focused on the present moment.

3.7. CONCLUSION

Sensitive to the situation of poverty and suffering in which people around her lived, Mother Teresa drew inspiration and content from the Scriptures and the Church's rich tradition to work out a way of life that would enable her and her followers to grow in holiness while tending the suffering. This spirituality demands frequent reception of the sacraments, a life of prayer, living according to the evangelical counsels and going for spiritual direction. Mother Teresa's own life illustrates that following this way of life can lead to a growth in one's faith, hope and charity. It is thus a recommended way for Christians especially those who look up to Mother Teresa as a model. It was this spirituality that allowed her to serve the poor in India and other parts of the world.

²¹¹ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 219.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOTHER TERESA'S MISSION IN INDIA AND BEYOND

4.0. INTRODUCTION

This present chapter is committed to examining the spirituality of Mother Teresa in practice by looking at the works of she did. The inspiration is drawn from the author of the biblical Letter of James who, cognizant of the intangibility of faith, posits works as a medium through which a person's faith is demonstrated. "But someone may say: So you have faith and I have good deeds? Show me this faith of yours without deeds, then! It is by my deeds that I will show you my faith" (2:18). Underscored here is the inseparability of faith from good deeds regarding the question of whether a person is saved by faith or good deeds. The text does not gainsay that salvation comes from faith in Jesus Christ, but it is insistent that faith reveals itself in good deeds. Faith devoid of deeds is consequently considered dead.

This response to a soteriological question provides the frame within which spirituality can as well be understood. Just like faith which, although imperceptible by itself, is revealed in deeds, so also spirituality is revealed by deeds. For this reason, the present chapter concentrates on the works of Mother Teresa. A knowledge of what she did, how she did it, for whom she did, and the reason for which she did it, exhibit her spirituality. In an introductory note to a collection of some teachings of Mother Teresa, Brian Kolodiejchuk opines that God was the centre of Mother Teresa's life, and love for God and neighbour was her message¹. True indeed, it was the strong desire to serve the Lord in his people that moved her to join a religious order². It is only by viewing things from this standpoint that Mother Teresa's words and works can be understood. The works for which she is popularly known are the activities from 1949 to 1997 during which she was "the heart and soul of Missionaries of Charity order". But before then she was a Loreto³ nun. It is necessary then that before we delve into her post-Loreto

¹ Cf. KOLODIJCHUK in MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, New York 2010, p. xi.

² Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 14.

³ The nuns commonly called Sisters of Loreto belonged to the Irish province of a religious order officially known as the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM). The province was founded by Mother Teresa Ball in 1822.

works, we should look at what made her to leave the religious order in which she was already finally professed.

4.1. DEPARTURE FROM LORETO

The parting with Loreto was one of the most crucial and decisive steps in the life of Mother Teresa, but she had not foreseen her departure at the time she joined that religious order in 1928. The aspiration to bring souls to the knowledge and love of God was so strong that she left her beloved Skopje to take a heroic step into the unknown⁴. The decision to be a missionary was indeed a leap into the dark since the young woman could not say for sure what awaited her in a foreign land. She went, all the same, basing herself entirely on the conviction that God wanted her to follow the religious way of life. It was not without difficulties. But nothing, not even the pain of separation from her natural family could deter her from answering the call of God. Although she had joined Loreto to stay, she bid this congregation goodbye twenty years after becoming a member of that order and eleven years after her final vows. What occasioned her leaving? Was she dismissed? Was there a change of conviction? How did she leave? Answers to these questions will give insight into Mother Teresa departure from Loreto.

Mother Teresa's suitability, attested by some of her religious sisters, makes it unlikely that she was expelled from the convent. A sister who was with her in the novitiate affirms: "I found Mother Teresa a very simple type of person. We never had any idea that she would ever leave Loreto. She was a sincere, religious type of novice"⁵. Many other sisters who lived or worked with her after years of formation equally spoke positively of her. Sister Mary of the Cenacle, for example, wept when she heard that Sister Teresa was leaving Loreto and said that losing her was like losing her right arm⁶. The testimonies of these witnesses show that Mother Teresa was a type of sister Loreto was proud to have; and rule out the possibility that she would have been dismissed.

The mission in Bengal – India was served by this Irish branch, and they have been active in India since 1841. It was to this religious order that Agnes Gonxha was directed when she asked about religious Sisters serving in Bengal so as to join them. And she did indeed was accepted in Loreto and sent to India in 1928. Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 14-15.

⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 59.

⁵ E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 19.

⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 35.

Could it then be that she lost youthful enthusiasm in the interim period between 1928 when she entered the convent and 1948 when she departed from Loreto? It does not seem so either since parting with Loreto did not imply leaving the religious life. As Mother Teresa herself said, she left in answer to what she believed was a “call within the call” to give up even Loreto where she was happy so as to go out in the streets to serve the poorest of the poor⁷. In her own words, therefore, obedience to God thanks to which she had joined the Loreto sisters was the very reason for which she was leaving them.

Mother Teresa scholarship exhibits conflicting views as to whether her leaving Loreto was a sudden or a gradual process. There are people like Louise Chipley Slavicek, one of Mother Teresa’s biographers, who hold the view that her departure was sudden. He writes that when Mother Teresa’s retreat⁸ period at Darjeeling was over, she presented to her spiritual director the notes in which she had outlined what she believed was God’s plan for her: “She was to resign from Loreto Order and establish a new missionary order dedicated to serving ‘the poorest of the poor [...]’”⁹ This shows how abrupt he conceives the departure to be: Mother Teresa’s leaving for the streets was something sudden following a mystical encounter with Christ in a train on her way to Darjeeling on 10 September 1946. G. Alphon, on the other hand, takes a critical stand against this view. In an article about the emergence of Mother Teresa as a religious visionary, he contends that the process was rather gradual¹⁰.

Whether it was gradual or abrupt, Mother Teresa’s intention to leave Loreto was not well-received by some of the sisters and she ran into problems from the very moment her decision was made known. There were sisters who did not only resent Mother Teresa’s claim that her experience on 10 September 1946 was an encounter with Jesus, but went as far as attempting to tarnish her spirituality by attributing her work to the

⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 40.

⁸ Mother Teresa had the divine inspiration to be a Missionary of Charity when she was in a train on her way to Darjeeling for a retreat. Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 29.

⁹ L. SLAVICEK, *Mother Teresa: Caring for the World’s Poor*, New York 2007, p. 38-39.

¹⁰ G. ALPHON, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma: A Sociological and Public Theological Perspective*, “International Journal of Public Theology” 8(2014), p. 45.

devil¹¹. Others were rather concerned about the stability and reputation of their congregation and feared that the convent will be upset if a nun of Mother Teresa's experience leaves¹². Still others were smart enough to read the message underlying Mother Teresa's abandonment of Loreto for the slums to serve the lowest of the low: it was a direct challenge to what their order stood for and their record in Calcutta¹³. In any case, a note was put up for every Loreto nun to see: "Do not criticize. Do not praise. Pray"¹⁴.

4.1.1. HER DEPARTURE AS A CRITIQUE OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN INDIA

As already seen above, Mother Teresa had particular disagreements with Loreto, but the actual reason for which she left applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to other religious orders in India as well. If her difficulties were specific to Loreto, the wise thing to do would perhaps have been to change her congregation. But her response to the archbishop regarding joining another congregation was categorical that her end could not be obtained by any congregation already in existence; a new congregation needed to be established¹⁵. The determination to abandon the traditional model of missionary work for a new one signifies a judgment on the old. Education and hospital apostolate were, customarily, the main preoccupations of nuns in India; and religious life was lived in enclosures. Loreto life style fitted well into this general structure. Apart from an annual retreat during which each sister had an occasion to leave her convent for a deepening of her religious commitment, the sisters lived the rest of their lives behind secure convent walls. In Egan's words, "[...] there was little reason to break the strict enclosure of the convent and the compound. According to the rules of the order, no sister ever went out unless it was a matter of urgency, such as a visit to a hospital. Even then, sisters did not use public transportation. A car was sent and the sisters always had a companion"¹⁶. The people who needed the sisters had to come to them. Obviously, those who were unable to come were deprived of the services of the sisters. It seems that Mother Teresa came

¹¹ Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 43.

¹² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 36

¹³ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 44.

¹⁴ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 31.

¹⁵ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 76.

¹⁶ E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 22.

to resent this restricted form of missionary work,¹⁷ and wanted a new congregation with a different outlook. But her leaving Loreto equally exposed Mother Teresa to criticisms that call to question the genuineness of her intentions and the necessity of founding a new congregation.

4.1.2. RATIONAL SCRUTINY OF MOTHER TERESA'S MOTIVES

Whether the Missionaries of Charity congregation was a necessity or whether Mother Teresa founded it for some selfish motives is a question that demands an answer. There are suggestions that the founder was indeed self-seeking. Alpion, for example, opines that the poor, the media, Missionaries of Charity Order, and the Co-Workers Organization were merely instruments which Mother Teresa employed to overcome her spiritual aridity¹⁸. Mother Teresa's abandonment of Loreto seems to lend support to this opinion. Given her conviction that Loreto was not responding adequately to the needs of the surrounding environment, one would have expected her to work to modify the congregation's outreach from within. Contrary to expectation, she abandoned Loreto to found a new congregation. This appears to betray a somewhat weak sense of belonging to a congregation that had nurtured her for close to twenty years, and point to some interest that could be selfish. One of Mother Teresa's fierce critics, Christopher Hitchens is of the opinion that her aim was that "[...]she may one day be counted as the beatific founder of a new order and discipline within the Church itself"¹⁹.

Additionally, the fact that she never occupied any prominent position in Loreto and that she was not considered very highly in the opinion of some sisters²⁰ is a possible reason why she would have wanted a congregation where she would be the boss. Worse still, there is scarcely any evidence that she did as much as discuss what she perceived as the inadequacies of Loreto with the superiors of the congregation. Alpion's remark that "the Loreto superiors are too set in their ways to introduce long-term changes to the

¹⁷ Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 34.

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁹ C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, London 1995, p. 37.

²⁰ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 109.

order's education orientation or improve outreach to the poor"²¹ seems to hint that Mother Teresa's mind was made known to the superiors who were then unwilling to change the status quo. The very Alphonso turns round and casts doubts on this possibility: "it is unlikely she would have had the opportunity to discuss her concerns with the Loreto superiors who were based at Loreto House in Calcutta, the headquarters of the Sisters of Loreto in India"²². Mother Teresa's departure would be justifiable if she had discussed her concerns with the superiors; but if she did not talk it over with them, there is every reason to suspect her motives. Lack of evidence regarding any of the possibilities leaves one in the territory of guesswork, and demands more arguments for one to take a stand.

4.1.2.1. Argument from divine call

This argument is based on Mother Teresa's claim that the inspiration to found a new congregation came from God. Although the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity is ascribed to Mother Teresa, she is insistent that it was God himself who wanted an order of nuns full of love and covered with the charity of the Cross²³. Her role was, therefore, that of a mere instrument in the realization of this divine will. That God uses a human agent in the realization of his plan is nothing strange or new. As an omnipotent being, God is capable of doing everything in and by himself, but he delights in drawing forth human cooperation in the attainment of some end. The Bible and Church history abound with examples of people whom God worked with to achieve some purpose. There is thus a possibility that he would have loved to establish the Missionaries of Charity through the instrumentality of Mother Teresa just as he liberated the Israelites from Egypt through that of Moses (Cf. Ex 3:7ff). If that be the case, then Mother Teresa is exonerated of the charge of self-seeking. This argument, however, is weakened by the fact that everyone who wants to found a congregation in the Church, genuinely or otherwise, always claims to have received a divine call to do so. It is thus insufficient to justify Mother Teresa's departure.

²¹ G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 39.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 48.

When the possibility of self-seeking is examined vis-à-vis the difficulties involved in founding the kind of congregation Mother Teresa envisaged, there is reason to think that she was genuine. It seems that only a fool or someone truly called by God would have abandoned Loreto for such a venture. Some Loreto sisters thought of Mother Teresa as mad or foolish²⁴ when they heard her plan precisely because they knew the difficulties involved. Founding Missionaries of Charity entailed abandoning a settled way of life for uncertainty; choosing the hard life of India; choosing great labours and sufferings; exposing oneself to scorn; and choosing loneliness and ignominy²⁵. An awareness of all this was perhaps what made Mother Teresa herself reluctant to forsake Loreto. She recounts in a testimony to Archbishop Périer: “I tried to persuade Our Lord that I would try to become a very fervent holy Loreto nun, a real victim here in this vocation”²⁶. But the firmness of the divine interlocutor would not let her. So like the man in one of Jesus’ parables, she sold all to purchase the hidden treasure of being a Missionary of Charity²⁷. Obedience, not self-seeking, is thus plausibly the reason for which Mother Teresa left Loreto to found Missionaries of Charity. Granted that several congregations were already operating in India, it remains to be investigated whether another one was necessary. This greatly depends on the judgment of the Church’s hierarchy.

4.1.2.2. Argument from the Church’s authority

Everyone is free, following his/her conscience, to found whatever they want to found, but the authority to assert that what is founded is of the Church belongs solely to the Church’s magisterium or hierarchy. This authority derives from Christ’s words to Peter and then the community of disciples: “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt 16:19; 18:18). An argument from authority is, therefore, helpful in determining the necessity of the congregation Mother Teresa founded. As much as the call to found Missionaries of Charity was addressed personally to Mother Teresa, the congregation is not her private

²⁴ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 66.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 48.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

²⁷ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 22.

property, but something that belongs to the Church. This presupposes that the authenticity of her charism and its ecclesial character was ascertained by the Church just as the Church does for any other vocation. Pope Francis reaffirms the position the Church has always held that “discernment about the ecclesial nature and reliability of charism is an ecclesial responsibility of the Pastors of the particular Churches”²⁸. This implies, inter alia, that the establishment of any Institute of Consecrated Life or Society of Apostolic Life requires the approval of a competent ecclesiastical authority. And this endorsement is not a thing the Church gives capriciously, but only after a long and tedious process of examination and discernment. John Paul II underscores the need for this examination when he states that the vitality of a new order “must be judged by the authority of the Church, which has the responsibility of examining them in order to discern the authenticity of the purpose for their foundation and to prevent the proliferation of institutions similar to one another, with the consequent risk of a harmful fragmentation into excessively small groups”²⁹. If at the end of a discernment process as indicated in the above-cited documents, the Church’s hierarchy sanctions the foundation of a new congregation, then it can be argued, from the Church’s authority, that the charism to found that congregation is genuine and necessary in the Church.

There is nothing Mother Teresa did, as far as the establishment of the congregation is concerned, without the approval of the competent Church authority. It was thanks to the permission granted her by the Vatican on 12 August 1948 that she left the community of the Sisters of Loreto while remaining under the authority of the Archbishop of Calcutta³⁰. Eventually, Archbishop Périer established the Foundress and her first eleven companions as a Religious Congregation of the Diocesan Right on 7 October 1950³¹. Fifteen years later, on 1 February 1965, Pope Paul VI established the Missionary Sisters of Charity as a Congregation of Pontifical Right, making it possible

²⁸ FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter, *Authenticum Charismatis*, Rome 2020.

²⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Rome 1996, n. 12.

³⁰ Cf. L. GJERGIJ, *A Samaritan of Mercy*, in <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/samaritan-of-mercy-5802>, [accessed 16/07/ 2021].

³¹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Sister M. Nirmala Joshi M.C., Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Missionaries of Charity*, in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20001017_missionaries-charity.html, [accessed 22/08/ 2021].

for them to expand into other countries³². The approval of the diocesan bishop of Calcutta and that of the Vatican are a ground for maintaining that Mother Teresa's charism to found a new order was both genuine and necessary. The necessity of this religious order can also be established from hindsight.

4.1.2.3. Argument from hindsight

The nature or significance of certain events is realized in hindsight; that is, the events are better understood after they have occurred. It was infused with the wisdom of hindsight that Gamaliel, a teacher of the law and member of the Sanhedrin, advised the assembly to release the apostles. His argument is: "If this enterprise, this movement of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if it does in fact come from God you will be unable to destroy them. Take care not to find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:38-39). Drawing from the experience of previous movements that equally claimed importance, but scattered with the death of their leaders, this Jewish scholar counselled his confreres to allow the movement of the apostles to run its course. For him, a movement like that of the apostles with a claim to divine origin is best appraised in hindsight and its worth is proved by the ability to endure. In this way, Gamaliel proposes hindsight as an angle to be considered in the assessment of a movement. Following his logic, the establishment of Missionaries of Charity can also be examined from the perspective of hindsight. Seventy two years after the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity³³, and twenty five years after the death of Mother Teresa³⁴ is not a very long time; but it is long enough to allow an evaluation from hindsight.

To the extent that some of Mother Teresa's contemporaries lacked the ability to foresee the future, they may be justified for denigrating her vision of religious life, but such a justification is no longer applicable to the men and women of today who enjoy the benefit of hindsight. If Mother Teresa's ego were the motive for the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity, the order would hardly have survived for this length of time.

³² Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Sister M. Nirmala Joshi M.C., Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Missionaries of Charity*, in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20001017_missionaries-charity.html, [accessed 22/08/ 2021].

³³ The Missionaries of Charity order was founded in 1950.

³⁴ Mother Teresa died in 1997.

Even if it lasted as long as she lived, it would probably not have endured after her death. Mother Teresa herself believed that “the congregation and the work would endure if it was God’s will for it to do so”³⁵. Today, twenty-five years after her death, the religious order has continued to thrive. This is indicative of the fact that the reason behind the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity was truly something beyond Mother Teresa as she herself often said. She relates how she tried to dissuade “Our Lord” from the idea of wanting her to establish a religious institute, but an answer came very clearly: “I want Indian Missionary Sisters of Charity – who would be My fire of love amongst the very poor – the sick – the dying – the little street children [...]”³⁶. Again, the finger of evidence points to the conclusion that the Missionaries of Charity were founded out of obedience to God.

Moreover, from Christ’s logic that a sound tree is recognized from the goodness of its fruits (Cf. Mt 7:17-18), one can contend that Mother Teresa’s vision of a new congregation was good because it has produced so many good fruits. These fruits are visible in the numerous women and men who, emulating the example of Mother Teresa, have devoted themselves as members of the Missionaries of Charity³⁷ to “the material and spiritual welfare of all destitute people, the helpless poor, neglected children, the abandoned sick, lepers and deserving beggars”³⁸. The fruits are especially seen in the various services the Missionaries of Charity provide for the poorest of the poor. These include: homes for the abandoned; homes for children; homes for the sick and dying; leprosy centres; education; medical assistance to outpatients; social assistance; and relief services including Covid-19 relief³⁹. They offer these services in 762 communities in 139 countries the world over⁴⁰. Their work has been recognized by both ecclesiastical and world leaders.

³⁵ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 276.

³⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 49.

³⁷ The Missionaries of Charity (MC) that Mother Teresa founded is a religious community that has several branches: MC Sisters (Sisters of Mother Teresa, active and contemplative), the MC Brothers (active and contemplative) and the MC Fathers. They all share in the charism of service to the poorest of the poor. Cf. MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity*, in <https://www.missionariesofcharity.org/notification.html>, [accessed 19/07/2021].

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*.

Mother Teresa's personality and work so endeared her to Pope John Paul II that no attentive eye could miss the special friendship between the two⁴¹. The Pope testified during his homily at Mother Teresa's beatification: "I am personally grateful to this courageous woman whom I have always felt beside me. Mother Teresa, an icon of the *Good Samaritan*, went everywhere to serve Christ in the poorest of the poor. Not even conflict and war could stand in her way"⁴². Following in the footsteps of this predecessor of his, Pope Francis has this to say of Mother Teresa: "Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries remains for us today an eloquent witness to God's closeness to the poorest of the poor"⁴³. On the occasion of Mother Teresa's eightieth birthday, the head of state of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, Ramiz Alia, issued a decree honouring her in which he acknowledged her endless love for people especially the poor, the sick, and the hungry, and said Albanians are proud of her as their great and honourable daughter⁴⁴. These and many other remarks all bear witness to the good fruits of the seed Mother Teresa planted years ago amidst doubts and suspicions from religious and members of her own community. Thus, hindsight gives more reason to affirm that the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity was divinely inspired. The distinctive feature of this order is seen in the vision its founder had.

4.2. MOTHER TERESA'S VISION OF MISSIONARY WORK

If the goal of every Catholic missionary endeavour could be compared to a mountain top, then one can say that Mother Teresa believed different roads (methods) could lead to that mountain top. She also had the courage and independent spirit to try new means when the existing ones were proving irrelevant. At the time when India was clamouring for Independence; when frequent clashes between Hindus and Muslims⁴⁵ left many wounded and homeless⁴⁶; and when Christianity was perceived more and

⁴¹ Cf. I. Murzaku, *Mother Teresa*, p. 212.

⁴² JOHN PAUL II, Homily on the Beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 19th October 2003, in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20031019_mother-theresa.html, [accessed 20/07/2021].

⁴³ FRANCIS, Homily at the Canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 4th September 2016, in https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160904_omelia-canonizzazione-madre-teresa.html, [accessed 20/07/2021].

⁴⁴ Cf. D. JANZ, *World Christianity and Marxism*, New York 1998, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Egan describes the sorry sight that Calcutta had become in these words: "The pilgrim's inn had become a hostel for pilgrims of the ultimate moment, men and women, barely alive, picked up from the alleyways and

more as a religion of the coloniser⁴⁷, Mother Teresa became convinced that if enclosure was the way of being religious everywhere; it was not very helpful in India. Her closeness to the underprivileged children at St Mary's⁴⁸ and St Teresa's⁴⁹ schools, and the experiences of the members of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin who went often to help the poor in the slums⁵⁰ made her appreciate better what was happening in the world around her. The knowledge of the sufferings of many people around her caused uneasiness in Mother Teresa since she had learned from her parents in the early years of her life to give to the needy. How could she possibly be comfortable in the convent when she was aware that there were people in want of basic necessities beyond its walls? Similar to Mary Ward⁵¹, the foundress of the IBVM, Mother Teresa dreamed of an order where sisters would be free from the enclosures so as to be able to go out and meet the poor wherever they were⁵². She preferred to be vulnerable with and for the poor than to be protected behind convent walls. She therefore advocated for a more "incarnational" approach to missionary work where the sisters (like the Son of God who humbled himself to become man so as to restore humanity's lost dignity) would become one with the poor in order to assist in the enhancement of their dignity⁵³.

In this scheme of things, prayer and meditation are seen not as moments separate from practice, but as internal elements of practice; and spirituality is understood as the contemplative awareness of our common responsibility for the betterment of fellow man. This strong sense of responsibility towards the needy made some people regard Mother Teresa and her followers as social workers⁵⁴. But she never considered herself

gutters of a scourged city. The year was 1955, eight years after the partition of the subcontinent of India along religious lines had given rise to an unstoppable cascade of refugees across newly made borders. Over four million of them had inundated truncated Bengal and one million had brought their destitution to its capital, Calcutta". *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Some Indian nationalists, including Mahatma Gandhi, had reservation about the nature of the work of Christian missionaries and called for their liberties to be curtailed. Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 46.

⁴⁸ St Mary was one of the least exclusive of the six Loreto schools in Calcutta and admitted even children from poor backgrounds. Cf. A. SEBBA, *Mother Teresa: Beyond the Image*, London 1997, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 45.

⁵⁰ Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 25.

⁵¹ Cf. P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, Chichester 2013, p. 131.

⁵² Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 18-19.

⁵³ Cf. I. Murzaku, *Mother Teresa*, p. 105-106.

⁵⁴ It was precisely because they saw her as a social worker that leaders of post-independent India irrespective of their religion and political orientation offered to work with Mother Teresa to implement their progressive

or her sisters as social workers: “I believe that we are not really social workers,” she once said: “We may be doing social work in the eyes of the people. But we are really contemplatives in the heart of the world”⁵⁵. This pithy remark refutes a false image of the Missionaries of Charity and defines them as contemplatives. In a way akin to Evelyn Underhill, Mother Teresa rejected all forms of self-seeking and embraced the conviction that spirituality does not imply abandoning the everyday world but rather a different way of being and acting in the world⁵⁶. All the same, the brand of missionary work she conceived became more appealing across India and beyond because of its ability to combine the private and public roles of religion. Now we have to go a step further and see how she lived out this vision.

4.3. UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY AND WORK AMONG THE POOR

According to Mother Teresa’s personal testimony, the mystical encounter with Christ on 10 September 1946 was a call to give up all and to go out in the streets to serve the poorest of the poor⁵⁷. The expression “the poorest of the poor” signifies the least in the society. Mother Teresa’s manner of work suggests that her understanding of poverty is not limited to lack of money or material goods. M. Morariu affirms after examining Mother Teresa’s spiritual autobiography: “It was not only the lack of basic material needs that represented the foundation for her understanding of poverty; there were also other forms of this disease that she was concerned with”⁵⁸. For Mother Teresa, a deficiency of anything, material or spiritual, necessary for a dignified human life constitutes poverty. Thus understood, poverty, can be distinguished into various forms depending on the need considered. M. Morariu proceeds to identify two types of poverty basing himself on the very words of Mother Teresa: material and spiritual⁵⁹. However, her emphasis in the text he cites is not to delimit the types of poverty, but to indicate that poverty is not simply a question of material deprivation⁶⁰. Forms of poverty other

programmes aimed at addressing acute social problems. Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charism/a*, p. 48.

⁵⁵ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 326.

⁵⁶ Cf. P. SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, p. 178.

⁵⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 39-40.

⁵⁸ M. MORARIU, *Aspects of Political Theology in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, “HTS Theologise studies/Theological Studies” 76(1), P. 3.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Cf. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 85.

than the material and the spiritual can be identified in Mother Teresa's works. They include what we shall call intellectual poverty, affective poverty, and physical poverty.

4.3.1. MATERIAL POVERTY

As the name suggests, material poverty denotes a deficiency of material needs vital to human survival such as food, clothing, shelter, or lack of the means to procure these needs. It is the most obvious form of poverty. Abraham Maslow, an American humanist psychologist theorizes that human beings are unable to move on to the next level of needs like esteem and self-actualization unless these basic physical requirements are met⁶¹. Material poverty thus renders people incapable of living a fully human life. It comes as a result of evils like natural disasters, prolonged sickness, unjust social structures, joblessness, and wars.

The long and unwelcomed presence of the British in India coupled with the caste system that prevented the "untouchables" from advancing socially and economically made many native Indians materially poor. Mother Teresa was not blind to such poverty. Her very first article published in *Catholic Missions*⁶² on 6 January 1929 indicates her sensitivity to the needs of the people. An extract of it reads: "Many families live in the streets, along the city walls, even in places thronged with people. Day and night they live out in the open on mats they have made from large palm leaves – or frequently on the bare ground. They are all virtually naked, wearing at best a ragged loincloth [...] As we went along the streets we chanced upon one family gathered around a dead relation, wrapped in worn red rags, strewn with yellow flowers, his face painted in coloured stripes. It was a horrifying scene."⁶³ This was just the beginning of what she was to experience almost every day of her stay in a land that became her home in due course.

Over and above the poverty of the poor, Mother Teresa recognized their humanity. Their economic situation, their castes, and the *karma* they were believed to have, did not make them less human. So, instead of despising and ignoring them as some

⁶¹ A. MASLOW, *Motivation and Personality*, New York 1954, p. 97-98.

⁶² *Catholic Missions* (Katolicke Misije) is a Croatian magazine on whose pages several Balkan Slav Priests related their experiences as missionaries. Mother Teresa read this publication regularly as a teenager; and when she eventually went to India as a missionary, she also contributed articles for the magazine. Cf. G. ALPION, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charisma*, p. 28.

⁶³ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 13.

people are wont to do, she decided to do something for them. Her desire was to see them live with the dignity of the children of God; and it seems she had a proper understanding of the theory Maslow put down to paper that a man cannot fully actualize his potentials if he suffers want of food, drink, clothing and shelter. Accordingly, she started her work with the poor by providing them these basic needs. She was not rich herself, but she and her Missionary Sisters of Charity were prepared to go begging so as to provide the hungry with food, the naked with clothes, the homeless with shelter. Stories are told of the many poor whose sense of dignity she restored by providing them with these basic needs.

That she begged to provide for the poor is very significant – it debunks the argument of those who ignore the needy under the pretext that they do not have; and calls out every human person to take care of our suffering brothers and sisters. Mother Teresa happily discovered that even the poorest of the poor in India were capable of reaching out to others. She narrates a story of how one day she took some rice to a family with eight children that had not eaten for so long. As soon as she gave them the rice, the mother of the house divided the rice into two and went out with one portion. When she came back Mother Teresa asked her where she had gone; and she gave her a simple answer: “they are hungry also”. The poor Hindu woman went out to share the rice she and her family had received with a Muslim family whom she knew had not also eaten for some days⁶⁴. This striking act of charity confirms Mother Teresa’s belief that what is necessary to care for the needy of the world is the willingness and the determination to do so. For her, if there are poor people in the world, it is not because God had made them poor, but because you and I do not share enough⁶⁵. Given their insufficient means of survival, some children could not attend schools, and hence suffer intellectual poverty.

4.3.2. INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Distinct from but related to material poverty is what we call here intellectual poverty. This does not mean lack of the intellect, of course, since every human person

⁶⁴ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 327.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 86.

is naturally endowed with one. Intellectual poverty rather signifies the lack of knowledge a person needs to fit in as a useful and responsible member of the society. Mother Teresa noticed, as she went among the poor in the slums, that some of them were so poor that they could not afford school fees for their children, and the schools in Calcutta would not accept the children without fees⁶⁶. As someone who was previously engaged in teaching, she was obviously aware that without formal education or some form of vocational training, the chances of a bright future for the many poor children who roamed the streets and slums of Calcutta were very slim. Her talent for communicating knowledge to others which was already manifest in her girlhood days⁶⁷; the teaching experience⁶⁸ she had gathered while with the Loreto Sisters; and the love she had for the poor children made her suitable and willing to respond to their intellectual needs.

As could be expected, Mother Teresa established a school at Motijhil, the first slum she went to after leaving Loreto. Her primary concern was not the structures but the essence of schooling. Kathryn Spink gives the following vivid description of her rough-and-ready slum school: “The ‘school’ was an open space among the huts, the children squatted in the dirt, and Mother Teresa scratched the letters of the Bengali alphabet in the mud with a stick. Nevertheless, the twenty-one pupils who arrived on the first day virtually doubled on the second and increased steadily until the noise of the alphabet being repeated was a familiar sound in the muddy alleyways that divided up the row upon row of improvised hovels”⁶⁹. K. Spink does well to put Mother Teresa’s school in open and closed inverted commas because what she describes here is far below the standard of even a modest school. Mother Teresa herself knew the conditions were not good enough for learning; she went on with the teaching all the same. The pragmatist in her intuited that if she had to wait for ideal conditions to teach the children who desperately needed the knowledge their counterparts from rich homes were gaining in normal schools, she could end up doing nothing.

⁶⁶ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 59.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Mother Teresa taught for long in St Mary’s school; and from 1935, she started leaving the Entally compound regularly to teach the poor children at St Teresa’s school.

⁶⁹ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 35.

She and the Missionaries of Charity started several of such schools throughout Calcutta where they taught the children reading and writing, hygiene, needlework, catechism. In due course, when she starting opening homes for children, she looked for benefactors to sponsor some of these children in official schools since the slum schools ran by the sisters were not recognized by the government⁷⁰. The idea was to improve the children's chances of getting a job by ensuring that those who had no parents should be given a skill, such as carpentry for boys and needlework for girls, or good education for those capable of learning⁷¹. Mother Teresa's was a modest attempt, but it did meet the intellectual needs of some of the children she encountered. The plans that her first trainee to get a job had of using her wages to move her family out of Motijhil slum⁷² showcases the quality of the education Mother Teresa imparted. This would have counted as real success in the eyes of Mother Teresa even if this were the only child who thought of improving the condition of her family. Success for her consists not in numbers but in the love that perceives Christ in the individual person⁷³. There were many other success stories of the children she picked from the streets and trained. Unfortunately, there could be no thought of sending some children to school because they were sickly or suffering physical poverty.

4.3.3. PHYSICAL POVERTY

Physical poverty, in Mother Teresa's understanding, describes the condition of people who are sick or unwell⁷⁴. People everywhere in the world suffer from this type of poverty. What disturbed Mother Teresa in India was not so much that people were sick, but that the available hospitals and other health institutions were insufficient to take in all those who were sick. They consequently admitted only those in whom they perceived some hope of recovery and who had the means of paying the bills. The rest were left to die unattended to and sometimes unloved. The streets of Calcutta and other Indian cities in the days of Mother Teresa testified to the immensity of this type of

⁷⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 59.

⁷¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁷² Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 63.

⁷³ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, San Francisco 1986, p. 118.

⁷⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 84.

poverty – they were full of the sick, the malnourished children, the destitute, the starving, the lepers and people suffering other forms of dreadful diseases.

In Mother Teresa’s reckoning, human beings are equally important irrespective of their health condition or whether they are financially rich or not; and the world’s beauty lies in people living with dignity. The determination to make society something beautiful for God impelled her to seek for ways to satisfy the needs of these people. Basic skills of caring for the sick which she had learned from the Holy Family Hospital in Patna⁷⁵ proved very useful as she work among the physically poor. Nevertheless, there were times when she was confronted with needs that taxed her abilities of the limits. “The story is told that when she was attending to the poor single-handed she found herself confronted by a man with a gangrenous thumb. Obviously it had to be removed, so she took a pair of scissors with, undoubtedly, a prayer, and cut. Her patient fainted one way and Mother Teresa the other”⁷⁶. This may sound careless from an expert’s point of view, but if one considers that there was no other means of helping this man, then Mother Teresa’s personality shines out – a woman who would try her best to help a desperate case rather than sit and do nothing. With this personality, she succeeded to establish homes for the dying, children’s homes, and leprosy centres where different sets of people suffering physical poverty were attended to. Her work for society’s weakest members prizes ontology above utility and challenges the world that has grown so utilitarian that a person’s worth is measured by his usefulness and not by who he is.

4.3.4. AFFECTIVE POVERTY

Mother Teresa is known to have said that “poverty doesn’t only consist of being hungry for bread, but rather it is a tremendous hunger for human dignity. We need to love and to be somebody for somebody else.”⁷⁷. Two points of interest emerge from this excerpt. The first is gotten from the use of “bread” which can be understood both literally and symbolically. Symbolically, “bread”, in this context, stands for material needs in general. Hence, by saying that “poverty doesn’t only consist of being hungry for bread,” she indicates that it is wider than the material needs. Secondly, she underscores another

⁷⁵ Cf. E. EGAN, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa*, p. 39.

⁷⁶ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 36.

⁷⁷ MOTHER TERESA, *Do Something Beautiful for God*, Florida 2019, p. 127.

type of poverty that touches particularly the affective dimension of the person, the need to love and to be loved. This again agrees perfectly with the famous Maslow who numbers love, affection and belongingness in the hierarchy of human needs⁷⁸. This form of poverty, according to Mother Teresa, is a more agonizing form of poverty than material poverty. She said often that what the poor need even more than food and clothing and shelter is to be wanted⁷⁹.

Practically, affective poverty is the poverty of a street child with no mother or father to love him; of a married couple who have no time for each other; of an alcoholic rejected by his family; or of an aged woman abandoned by her own children in old people's home. It is what those who either have no one to care and love them or those who do not know how to love suffer from. Mother Teresa came across the affectively poor not only in India but everywhere in the world especially in the Western world. This poverty was so widespread in the West that she termed it the poverty of the West: "I find the poverty of the West, much, much, much greater, much more difficult to remove because a piece of bread will not satisfy the hunger of the heart. And our people, the 'shut-ins,' as we call them, they are the hungry people. The fear, the bitterness, the hurt, the loneliness, the feeling of being unwanted, unloved, uncared for... I think it is a tremendous disease, much greater than leprosy and tuberculosis"⁸⁰. To an English audience she said once: "You have a welfare state in England, but I have walked at night and gone into your homes and found people dying unloved. Here you have a different kind of poverty – a poverty of the spirit, of loneliness, and of being unwanted. And this is the worst disease in the world today, not tuberculosis or leprosy"⁸¹. The comparison with tuberculosis and leprosy goes to show how seriously Mother Teresa considered the state of being unwanted.

To do something for people with affective poverty, Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity visited the lonely and the elderly in their homes, and administered to the abandoned children in the streets. They too were induced by the

⁷⁸ Cf. A. MASLOW, *Motivation and Personality*, New York 1954, p. 43.

⁷⁹ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 22.

⁸⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Mother Teresa: Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 179.

⁸¹ MOTHER TERESA, *A Gift for God: Prayers and Meditations*, New York 1996, p. 63-64.

recognition of this cruel reality to found Homes of Compassion for destitute men and women. There they feed the hungry, attend to the dying, and touch areas of human suffering from which others shield away⁸². The *raison d'être* of such homes is to love these vulnerable people so that even if they are dying they should die knowing that they mean something to somebody and that someone loves and cares for them. Their success in this endeavour can best be judged by the poor themselves. A dying man whom the sisters had picked up from the drains confirmed the work of the sisters: "I have lived all my life like a rat, now I am dying like an angel, loved and cared for"⁸³. This testimony indicates the spirit with which Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity did their social work; a spirit which distinguishes them from other groups equally involved in social works. Social workers who do their work for mere philanthropic reasons do it for something, whereas Missionaries of Charity do it to somebody⁸⁴.

4.3.5. SPIRITUAL POVERTY

While we have identified several forms of poverty in Mother Teresa's works and teachings, there are Mother Teresa scholars who often content themselves with two: material and spiritual poverty⁸⁵. Of all the forms of poverty, Mother Teresa opines that spiritual⁸⁶ poverty, which is very much present in the West as is affective poverty, is the worst. Contrasting the reality of poverty in India and in the West, she declares: "In Western countries, there is no material poverty in the sense we give to this expression. You don't see anyone starving in these countries. No one gets to experience a hunger as intense as the one because of which many go crazy in India. But in the West there is another kind of poverty: a spiritual poverty. This is much worse. Man does not believe in God, he does not pray"⁸⁷. By the spiritually poor, therefore, Mother Teresa refers to those who do not know God or who know but do not pray, that is, have no personal

⁸² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 86.

⁸³ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

⁸⁴ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 114.

⁸⁵ Cf. M. MORARIU, *Aspects of Political Theology in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Mother Teresa sometimes uses the expression "spiritual poverty" to also refer to the state of being unwanted. For the sake of distinction and clarity, this work uses "spiritual poverty" to refer only to a lack of a relationship with God, and uses "affective poverty" to refer to loneliness or the state of being unwanted.

⁸⁷ TERESA DI CALCUTTA, *La Mia Vita [My Life]*, Milano 1990, p. 108-109.

relationship with God. John F. Haught confirms an increase in the number of such people in these words: “I must confess, however, my disappointment in witnessing the recent surge of interest in atheism”⁸⁸. Although it may be more rampant in the West, spiritual poverty is by no means an exclusively Western phenomenon.

Mother Teresa’s Christian background would have taught her that “man is created by God and for God”⁸⁹. If God is the reason for which we live, then no deprivation could be worse than living without him. Consequently, her work among the poor was not limited to satisfying their material and other needs, but equally included bringing them to God. Spiritually sensitive as she was, Mother Teresa saw not only the hunger, the nakedness, the homelessness and the sickness of the poor, but also perceived the brokenness of their souls. In line with Maslow’s principle that if lower human needs like the physiological needs are not met it will be difficult to move to the satisfaction of needs of a higher level, it was obvious that the suffering of the bodies of the poor made them “forget the terrible sufferings their souls will have for all eternity”⁹⁰. Mother Teresa felt so sorry for the many she sensed were dying without God because there was no one to tell them about God’s mercy. Thus, she answered the call within a call so as to be a victim of the poor, to enter their holes, their unhappy homes so that they may see God, know God and want him⁹¹.

In order to practically enter into this apostolate, she and her sisters endeavoured to be souls at prayer. Prayer, she says, is oneness with God⁹². This complete unity with God allowed God to work through them so that those to whom they ministered encountered not them, but God at work in them. It is in this way that they were drawn to God. Also, they equally spoke to the people they serve about God and taught some catechism so that they may come to know God and his ways. In this way, they satisfied the spiritual hunger of the poor they met. This fits in with what a great Churchman of our times, Robert Cardinal Sarah says: “Missionary work consists not only of

⁸⁸ J. HAUGHT, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*, London 2008, p. xi.

⁸⁹ CCC n. 27.

⁹⁰ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 77.

⁹¹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁹² Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Do Something Beautiful for God*, p. 206.

communicating a message but also of helping people to encounter Christ and to have an intimate experience of his love”⁹³.

Mother Teresa used the single word “poverty” to refer to all these realities. Whenever she made mention of “the poor”, she was referring either to those who are suffering from any of these or from all of them at the same time. Although the various forms of poverty are distinct, there is a sense in which they are related one to another; and so it happened very often that the people Mother Teresa attended to were suffering from several of these forms at the same time. As already hinted, the mother of the poor was not working alone.

4.4. THE FOUNDATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY

Mother Teresa’s mission to serve the poorest of the poor included just any person who could be described as poor according to the above senses of that term. As such, it involved a great number of people with diverse kinds of needs. One implication of this is that a single person could not satisfactorily do the work. No wonder, the call to satiate the thirst of Christ was coupled up with the call to found Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa is reported to have heard, during one of her mystical experiences, the voice of Christ saying: “I want India Missionary Sisters of Charity – who would be My fire of love amongst the very poor – the sick – the dying – the little street children. – The poor I want you to bring to Me – and the Sisters that would offer their lives as victims of My love – would bring these souls to Me. You are, I know, the most incapable person, weak & sinful, but just because you are that I want to use you, for My glory. Wilt thou refuse?”⁹⁴. The insistent use of “I want” can hardly escape anyone’s notice; and, indicates that the addresser is not seeking his addressee’s opinion, but rather giving instructions to be carried out. The words were addressed to Mother Teresa after she tried to persuade Christ to allow her remain a Loreto nun. Christ’s firm instructions succeeded to elicit her positive response, and so, Missionaries of Charity were established. The foundation of this religious family is among the greatest things Mother Teresa did because it ensures continuity of the mission to the poor after her death.

⁹³ R. SARAH, *God or Nothing*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2015, p. 234.

⁹⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 49.

The Missionaries of Charity order did not and could not exist before its foundation. This means it came to be at a particular point in time. About beings that begin to be, Bernard N. Fonlon, a Cameroonian scholar of Nso' extraction, maintains, in the footsteps of ancient philosophers "that everything that comes into being, every event, every effect, must have a cause; whatsoever that begins to be, and is, must have a cause"⁹⁵. If everything that comes into being has a cause, then the Missionaries of Charity order must have a cause since it came to be. An analysis of the cause(s) responsible for its being will be helpful for a systematic understanding of the Missionaries of Charity.

4.4.1. CAUSES OF THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY

If a cause is "that which makes a thing to be what it is"⁹⁶, then it is evident from the above-cited words to Mother Teresa that Christ is the cause of the "Missionaries of Charity" because he himself conceived and executed the idea expressed in the words: "I want India Missionary Sisters of Charity". More so, Christ willed to work out his plan of establishing the Missionaries of Charity through the agency of Mother Teresa. Because Mother Teresa actively participated in the bringing about of this congregation, she too is its cause, though of a different order from Christ. He is the principal cause, whereas Mother Teresa is the instrumental cause; both constitute what, in Metaphysical jargon, is called efficient cause⁹⁷. One may move from here to ask why the institute was founded.

Definitely, Christ's desire for the "Missionaries of Charity" was not aimless. There is an intention or purpose for which he wanted the congregation to be founded. Christ wanted sisters who would be his fire of love to the very poor so as to bring them to him. This goal inevitably determined the structure of the congregation. Thus, the purpose for which the "Missionaries of Charity" exists contributed, in an essential

⁹⁵ B. FONLON, *The Genuine Intellectual*, Yaoundé 1978, p. 56.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

⁹⁷ In Aristotle's understanding, *causa efficiens* or "efficient cause" is a making cause or moving cause responsible for a movement that results in something being made. Cf. A. PREUS, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Lanham 2007, p. 95.

measure, to make the congregation to be what it is. For this, “bringing the poor souls to Christ” is also a cause of the “Missionaries of Charity”. It is its final cause.

Moreover, “Missionaries of Charity” is not an abstract term. It is given substance to by the concrete human beings that constitute that congregation. Christ specified the people: Indian Sisters. The concept of “Indian” is not understood here strictly as people originating from the Indian Sub-continent, otherwise Mother Teresa herself would not have qualified to be a Missionary of Charity. Mother Teresa gives a clue to her understanding of that concept in a response to Archbishop Périer regarding what kind of people would be recruited for the work of the Missionaries of Charity. She writes: “Girls from the age of 16 upwards. – Strong in body and mind with plenty of common sense. No special qualification – but must be able to learn or know the language of the country thoroughly. Generous and lovers of the poor. They must be able to put their hands to any kind of work however repugnant to human nature. They must be of bright, cheerful disposition. – Girls of any nationality – but for whatever nation they enter that people’s language and ways must be theirs [...]”⁹⁸. This clearly shows that Mother Teresa understood the expression “Indian Missionary Sisters” to stand for women prepared to embrace the ordinary way of life of the people among whom they are called to work as religious sisters, irrespective of their provenance. These individuals may be called the “material” of which the “Missionaries of Charity” is made. This “material”, of course, contributes absolutely in making the “Missionaries of Charity” what it is; for, without these people, there would be no “Missionaries of Charity” at all, despite Christ and his purpose. Members of the congregation are, therefore, its material cause.

Finally, there is the form or structure that the “Missionaries of Charity” assumes, thanks to the purpose for its foundation. It states precisely how each member of the congregation is expected to conduct her life. This is nowhere stated by Christ, the principal cause of the congregation. He seems to have left that to the ingenuity of the human agent whose instrumentality he employed. Before she left the Medical Mission Sisters from whom she learned some skills in nursing, Mother Teresa already had a rudimentary idea of the shape she wanted her sisters to take. Kathryn Spink confirms:

⁹⁸ MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 75.

“Mother Teresa was intent upon starting a congregation, members of which would lead the lives of India’s poor. She intended that she and the girls whom she expected to join her would live, dress, and eat like the poorest of the poor, whom they would tend, feed, and clothe as the suffering Christ. The nuns’ food would accordingly consist solely of rice and salt, the humblest of Bengali diets. Experience had demonstrated to the Medical Mission Sisters, however, that without proper nutrition it was impossible to work efficiently over a long period of time. On the kind of diet Mother Teresa proposed, her sisters would become prey to the same diseases that afflicted the poor. In humility Mother Teresa took the advice given her [...] she did so resolve that those who came to her in her formidable task should receive the sustenance they require. In obedience they would eat no more, but also no less, than necessary”⁹⁹. As with the diet, so it was with other aspects of life. Learning from other congregations and from their own experience, Mother Teresa and her followers gave form to the congregation as expressed in the constitution of the Missionaries of Charity. This constitution, thus, contributes in making the “Missionaries of Charity” what it is; and so, it is the formal cause of the congregation.

Christ, Mother Teresa, members of the “Missionaries of Charity”, the purpose and the structure (constitution) of this congregation all combine to make the “Missionaries of Charity” what it is. They constitute the fourfold cause of this congregation: the efficient, the material, the final and the formal causes. The foundation of the “Missionaries of Charity” is one of the greatest achievement of Mother Teresa because the mission she received from Christ and her legacy live on through the Missionaries of Charity.

4.4.2. MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY FAMILY

What is known as the Missionaries of Charity Family came as a result of the more and more people around the world who became attracted to Mother Teresa’s work and vision. Movements or associations and religious congregations were thus established to follow her vision of quenching the infinite thirst of Jesus Christ on the Cross for love of souls. In the early 1960s, in addition to the congregation of sisters that she founded in

⁹⁹ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 33.

1950, Mother Teresa conceived an idea of a congregation of brothers very similar to that of the sisters, trained in the same spirit and working in conjunction with them after the realization that certain aspects of the work were more suited to men than to women¹⁰⁰. According to their apostolate, “the brother offers himself as an instrument of God’s love for the poor person and expresses his friendship by comforting and caring for them in their immediate needs. The nature of this loving service differs according to the needs of the poorest of that place, but it is usually a service through ordinary, humble works of day-to-day care and concern, always in personal contact with the poor person”¹⁰¹. The idea of a foundation for the brothers was realized on 25 March 1963 when with the help of Fr Julien Henry and the blessings of Archbishop Albert D’souza, Mother Teresa formed a foundation of brothers¹⁰².

The contemplative wing of the sisters started in New York on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June 1976 in the presence of Mother Teresa and Cardinal Cooke who blessed the new congregation. The inspiration came when it dawned unto Mother Teresa that the sisters who could no longer go out physically in search of souls, on account of poor health or old age, could still spend a better part of their lives for Jesus in silence and adoration¹⁰³. It was, however, modified to include not only the sick and the elderly, but anyone feeling called to serve God in a contemplative way of life as a Missionary of Charity. The particular mission of these sisters is spelt out in the following words of Mother Teresa: “The sisters will live the Word of God in Eucharistic adoration and Contemplation, and will proclaim the Word to the people of God – and so, with Mary, Mother of the Church, bring the Word made Flesh [...] dwell in the hearts of all men. They are a beautiful gift of God to the Church”¹⁰⁴. Nevertheless, the rule of life of the Missionaries of Charity Contemplative Sisters makes provision for sisters to do

¹⁰⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 103.

¹⁰¹ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity – Brothers*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-brothers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹⁰² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 104.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁴ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity Sisters – Contemplatives*, in <https://motherteresa.org/contemplative-sisters.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

active apostolic work among the poor for some hours in the afternoons¹⁰⁵. In this way, they differ from the traditional contemplatives.

As should already be expected, there is also the contemplative branch of the brothers. Mother Teresa started it in the slums of Rome in March 1979. Their apostolate is stated as follows: “The first mission-field for us is our own hearts, and the second one is our own brothers in community who have the special need to find God’s tender love reflected in us”¹⁰⁶. Unlike the active and contemplative branches of the sisters which though distinct are not separated, the contemplative branch of the brothers is separated from the Missionary Brothers. The separation was consequent on the friction that existed between Mother Teresa and Br Andrew, the superior of the brothers, who did not endorse Mother Teresa’s move for a contemplative branch¹⁰⁷.

Apart from sisters and brothers, there are Missionaries of Charity Fathers. This is a branch for priest who exercise their ministry in the spirit of Mother Teresa, and bind themselves to the Missionaries of Charity ideal of life¹⁰⁸. It does not overlap with, but complements the role of the brothers and gives more direct expression to the spiritual ministry of priests. “The Fathers seek out the materially and spiritually poorest of the poor – the least, the last and the lost, those most in need of God’s mercy – striving to be instruments of God’s saving love by their presence and ministry of the word and sacrament”¹⁰⁹. Even though Mother Teresa expressed the desire for sympathetic priests to work with the sisters, the idea of the Missionaries of Charity Fathers came from Fr Joseph Langford, an America priest¹¹⁰. Missionaries of Charity Fathers was founded as a clerical religious institute of the diocesan right in New York by Mother Teresa and Fr Langford.

¹⁰⁵ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity Sisters – Contemplatives*, in <https://motherteresa.org/contemplative-sisters.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹⁰⁶ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity Brothers – Contemplatives*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-contemplative-brothers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹⁰⁷ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 120.

¹⁰⁹ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity – Fathers*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-fathers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹¹⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 120.

Other priests who walk in the footsteps of Mother Teresa are members of the Corpus Christi Movement for Priest. It is an association of Diocesan priests that seeks to “promote holiness among secular priests in the exercise of their ministry in close union with their respective bishops and with the members of their proper presbyterate”¹¹¹.

Added to these groups of religious and priests, are organizations for lay people that belong to this group family such as Co-workers, that is, people who put love into living action in the service of the poor beginning in the family;¹¹² Volunteers of Mother Teresa; and Lay Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa regarded all these groups as parts of the one family of the Missionaries of Charity with which she was well-pleased. That is also how the sisters and the brothers of various branches, the priests and the lay people who follow her vision see themselves. The differences of the various groups notwithstanding, they are united by these essentials: seriousness in prayer, love for the poor, simplicity of life, and the need for a community¹¹³. These essentials are lived out according to each person’s state of life. This family of missionaries exists so as to be involved in the life of the people as Mother Teresa herself was.

4.5. INVOLVEMENT IN PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES

The currency and significance of the population question and related questions which touch human life make the silence of someone of Mother Teresa’s calibre a near impossibility. Christopher Hitchens corroborates that “there is no rational way of saying that the question [of population] does not arise”¹¹⁴. The severity of the matter is evidenced by the draconian measures taken by some governments around the world to tackle the problem such as the attempt by Indira Gandhi¹¹⁵ to bring about male

¹¹¹ MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity – Priest Associates*, in <https://motherteresa.org/corpus-christi-movement-for-priests.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹¹² Cf. Mother Teresa, *Co-Workers of Mother Teresa*, in <https://motherteresa.org/international-movement-of-co-workers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

¹¹³ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 111.

¹¹⁴ C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, p. 30.

¹¹⁵ She was the Prime Minister of India from 19 January 1966 to 24 March 1977.

sterilization in India¹¹⁶, and the policy of the Peoples Republic of China which limited families to one child apiece¹¹⁷. Using the platform which her international reputation afforded her, Mother Teresa missed no opportunity to address these topical and controversial issues. When, for example, the Prime Minister of India launched her sterilization programme, Mother Teresa did not hesitate to deliver to Mrs Gandhi a letter from Catholic Bishops Conference stating their opposition to the programme. She also personally told the Prime Minister that she would not be blessed for what she was doing¹¹⁸. And when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Mother Teresa took advantage of the occasion, to some people's consternation, to talk about abortion. She said, among other things: "Many people are very, very concerned with the children in India, with the children in Africa where quite a number die, maybe of malnutrition, of hunger and so on, but millions are dying deliberately by the will of the mother. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today. Because if a mother can kill her own child – what is left for me to kill you and you kill me – there is nothing between"¹¹⁹. As she praised the sympathy of Westerners to Indian and African children dying of natural causes, Mother Teresa challenged them to be more introspective and not forget millions of their own children dying by the deliberate will of their mothers. Her take, in the main, is that abortion whereby a parent intentionally kills his/her own child is far more horrifying than a child dying for lack of food.

Mother Teresa's stance on these issues has garnered both praise and criticisms. We shall concentrate on criticisms for it is hoped that her position is made clearer by exposing her critics. Mother Teresa's critics do not dispute with her, though, that children are good in themselves. Mother Teresa likewise agrees with them that it is unnecessary for one to have children one cannot take care of. Both parties, therefore, see the need for some form of birth regulation. What brings them at variance with each other is the method to be used. Even Mother Teresa's ardent admirer, Indira Gandhi, differs with her on this point. Gandhi thinks the Government can step in to control family

¹¹⁶ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 61.

¹¹⁷ Cf. K. PLETCHER, *One-Child Policy*, in <https://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>, [accessed 02/09/2021].

¹¹⁸ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

size, and sees no problem in using sterilization; whereas Mother Teresa interprets such Government intervention as an infringement of the rights of the family, and opposes the use of sterilization either by the Government or the couples themselves. Gandhi is not the lone person whose ideas run counter to that of Mother Teresa. In a 2013 article, some three Canadian scholars acknowledge Mother Teresa's firm opposition to abortion, contraception and divorce just so in a bid to fault her on the grounds that such opposition could only increase misery in Calcutta¹²⁰. A couple of critics attack Mother Teresa on this point; their criticism, in a nutshell, is that she failed to adopt more progressive measures to fight poverty like the use of contraceptives, sterilization and abortion.

But Mother Teresa is not a mere "primitive sermonizer"¹²¹, as Hitchens dubs her, but a woman who acted out of principles. As a faithful daughter of the Church, she believes that the sexual act whose proper context is in marriage should always be opened to life¹²². This then explains her fundamental opposition to contraceptives or the artificial methods of birth control. And guided by scientifically sound views like the one quoted by Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone that "a new, genetically-distinct human life begins at conception, defined as fertilization: 'Development of the embryo begins at Stage 1 when a sperm fertilizes an oocyte and together they form a zygote,'"¹²³ she advocates against abortion since it is an act of taking away human life just like infanticide and homicide. If Mother Teresa does not support contraceptives, then it is obvious that she would fight against sterilization that damages a person's bodily integrity and deprives him/her of the possibility of procreating.

Rather than merely condemn contraceptives, abortion and sterilization, Mother Teresa recommends methods of birth control which "would not destroy the life that God

¹²⁰ Cf. S. LARIVÉE – C. SÉNÉCHAL – G. CHÉNARD, *Les côtés ténébreux de Mère Teresa*, "Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses" 42 (2013), p. 328.

¹²¹ C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, p. 11.

¹²² Cf. PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter, *Humanae Vitae*, Rome 1968, nn. 11, 14.

Kathryn Spink makes it known that when Paul VI published this encyclical in which he condemned all forms of birth control except the rhythm method, Mother Teresa instructed her sisters to encourage the people they served to accept joyful the papal instruction and not to engage in any discussions or arguments to the contrary. Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 62.

¹²³ S. CORDILEONE, *A Pastoral Letter on the Human Dignity of the Unborn, Holy Communion, and Catholics in Public Life*, in <https://sfarch.org/inthewomb>, [accessed 04/05/2021].

has created in us”¹²⁴. Such methods include self-control on the part of couples, the use of natural family planning and adoption. Missionaries of Charity actively fight abortion and contraception by running orphanages or homes for children and promoting adoption. Many children have been adopted thanks to their mediation. Mother Teresa likewise created centres where beggars, leprosy patients, slum dwellers and any other person who wants, irrespective of their religious background, are taught the moral, the legal, and scientific method of natural family planning. Calcutta alone had 102 of those centres from 1971 to 1978; and within that interval the sisters helped 11,701 Hindu families, 5,568 Muslims and 4,341 Christian families; and there were 61,397 less babies from the families who practised this method¹²⁵. These statistics demonstrate that it is possible to control family size without necessarily violating human dignity, and going against the will of God. Mother Teresa defends this position because it both safeguards life and promotes peace.

4.6. PROMOTION OF PEACE

In addition to her reputation for charitable activities, Mother Teresa is equally known for her efforts at promoting peace. Whereas no one, not even her critics doubt her dedication to the poor¹²⁶, some people are sceptical about her peace-promoting role. Such scepticism is given voice to in Christopher Hitchens’ claim that: “When Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, few people had the poor taste to ask what she had ever done, or even *claimed* to do, for the cause of peace. Her address to the ceremony of investiture did little to resolve any doubt on this score and much to increase it”¹²⁷. A statement like this calls to question not only Mother Teresa’s reputation, but equally the judgment of the Norwegian Nobel Committee that elected her for the peace award. We cannot presume to talk on behalf of the Nobel Committee, but C. Hitchens’ concerns demand a response from anyone attempting to say something

¹²⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹²⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *An Open Letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai – Regarding the Freedom of Religion Bill 1978*, in <https://libslabyrinth.blogspot.com/2012/08/mother-terera-on-religious-freedom.html>, [accessed 07/09/2021].

¹²⁶ What some critics of Mother Teresa question are her motives; they do not doubt that she committed herself to the poor.

¹²⁷ C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, London 1995, p. 56.

about the role Mother Teresa played in promoting peace. This section of our work therefore has the resolution of these doubts as its aim. It proceeds by looking at the meaning of peace and how Mother Teresa urged or helped people to live peacefully.

The concept of “peace” does not admit a facile definition. A respected Polish scholar, Marek Tatar, explains in his masterpiece about the spirituality of peace that the difficulties in defining “peace” come from its interdisciplinary and multidimensional nature¹²⁸. While admitting the difficulty of defining peace, we limit ourselves to a dictionary definition because it suffices for the purpose of showing Mother Teresa’s role in promoting peace. Generally understood as a state of tranquillity or quiet, peace is precisely defined in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as “ a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom,” or “freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions”¹²⁹. The meaning of peace provided here is twofold, and embraces the peace that arises from causes external to an individual person (law or custom); and that which comes from within the person (from thoughts or emotions). This definition corresponds with Mother Teresa’s understanding of peace. For her, peace is something internal as well as external. Mother Teresa experienced interior peace which resulted from her life of union with God; and manifested itself exteriorly in a peaceful disposition towards her work. Like St Francis of Assisi, it was her daily wish that God should make her a channel of his peace¹³⁰. She therefore made daily efforts to spread peace wherever she went.

She firmly believes that works of love are works of peace¹³¹. This belief accords to right reason for those who lack basic necessities of life like food, clothing, shelter, and security cannot truly be said to be having tranquillity of thoughts or emotions since their need for these things keep them worrying. Works of love by which the needs of the needy are satisfied are therefore works of peace. Similarly, Tatar sees peace, from the perspective of *Pacem in Terris*¹³², as necessarily related to love, justice, truth and

¹²⁸ Cf. M. TATAR, *Duchowość Pokoju w Teologii Kardynała Basila Hume’a*, Warszawa 2013, p. 25.

¹²⁹ MERRIAM-WEBSTER, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>, [accessed 09/09/2021].

¹³⁰ Cf. I. Murzaku, *Mother Teresa*, p.129-131.

¹³¹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Mother Teresa: Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 16.

¹³² *Pacem in Terris* is the 1963 encyclical letter of Pope John XXIII on the theme of universal peace.

freedom¹³³. It was in this sense that Mother Teresa regarded her charitable endeavours as works of peace, and hence could receive peace awards without any qualms of conscience. By the way, the numerous peace awards she received were an acknowledgment of her work of promoting peace. At one of the peace award ceremonies she said: “And with this prize that I have received as a prize of peace, I am going to try to make the home for many people that have no home. Because I believe that love begins at home, and if there we can create a home for the poor – I think that more love will spread. And we will be able through this understanding love to bring peace, be the good news to the poor”¹³⁴. Again, this shows that for her, works of love and works of peace are identical; and she used the money she received either from benefactors or awards to promote such works.

She established homes for the dying where those who are sick and abandoned in the streets are brought to be loved and cared for¹³⁵; homes for children where orphans and street children are taken care of and trained for the future; leprosy centres where ostracised lepers are treated and empowered to take care of themselves¹³⁶; homes for victims of AIDS whose family and friends had shunned them; and other centres that take care of helpless people with various needs. The peace Mother Teresa wrought for the people she attended to is attested by many like the dying man whom she and her sisters had picked from the drain, half eaten with worms who confirmed that he had lived like an animal in the streets, but that he was going to die like an angel, loved and cared for¹³⁷. This definitely suffices to qualify Mother Teresa as a peace-promoter, but her efforts went further than these circles.

She was also committed to peace at an international level. A number of activities demonstrate this commitment. She visited Beirut in 1982 at the behest of Pope John Paul II as an expression of his solidarity with the Beirut victims of war. Arriving Beirut at a time when bombing and shelling were at their worst, she managed to broker a temporary

¹³³ Cf. M. TATAR, *Duchowość Pokoju w Teologii Kardynała Basila Hume'a*, Warszawa 2013, p. 52.

¹³⁴ MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

¹³⁵ Cf. M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, p. 92.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹³⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

cease-fire between the Israeli army and Palestinian guerrillas. As a result, she was able to rescue thirty seven children trapped in a front-line hospital accompanied by Red Cross workers¹³⁸. Had she listened to those who advised her not to take such a risk for a small number of people, the children would not have probably been rescued. Her argument, however, was that Jesus would have died for one sinner if that were the only person in need of redemption. No one who seriously thinks of the anxiety of these children at the time they were trapped in that hospital would dispute Mother Teresa's role as a promoter of peace. Another thing that showcases her commitment to international peace is the letter she wrote, during a period of tension that preceded the 1991 Gulf War, to the U.S. president George Bush and the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein urging them to reconcile and let love and peace triumph¹³⁹. History makes it known that her letter did not produce the desired effects, but her determination was that "if the peace of the world was to be destroyed it would not be for want of her energetic and even-handed intervention"¹⁴⁰.

Moreover, it was her desire for peace that motivated Mother Teresa to address an open letter to the Indian Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, when she sensed that religious freedom was threatened by a bill proposed in the Indian Parliament in 1978. "There is no freedom," she wrote "if a person is not free to choose according to his or her conscience"¹⁴¹. She well-understood, as Marek Tatar explains, that there is an intimate relationship between freedom and peace. Her appeal for freedom was, in the end, an attempt to restore peace.

Equally, Mother Teresa promoted peace by her words as the calls for forgiveness and reconciliation she made prove. She recognises forgiveness as a precondition for peace. Thus her first words to throngs of angry relatives of the victims of the 1984 Bhopal explosion that had claimed over two and a half thousand persons and left many thousands more choked by lung-searing emissions were that they should forgive¹⁴². In

¹³⁸ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 189.

¹³⁹ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, "Letter of Mother Teresa to President George Bush and President Saddam Hussein," in H. J. KUDO, *Mother Teresa: A Saint from Skopje*, Anand 2006, p 238.

¹⁴⁰ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. xi.

¹⁴¹ MOTHER TERESA, *An Open Letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai – Regarding the Freedom of Religion Bill 1978*, in <https://libslabyrinth.blogspot.com/2012/08/mother-terera-on-religious-freedom.html>, [accessed 07/09/2021].

¹⁴² Cf. C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, p. 87.

the same way, she advised her Co-Workers, as she did other people, to forgive endlessly and make their homes centres of compassion¹⁴³. The constant talk of forgiveness in moments of tension and anger reveals Mother Teresa's conviction that forgiveness restores peace to both the forgiven and the forgiver by liberating them from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions.

Mother Teresa realized that peace is a reality with extrinsic as well as intrinsic causes; and something which concerns people not only at the macro level, but also at the micro one. Her efforts to promote peace, therefore, took all these levels into consideration. Since she believed in doing little things with great love, she easily connected little domestic gestures like a smile with international peace-promoting role. Her peace-promoting role did not ignore the situation of women.

4.7. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Mother Teresa's contribution to the fight for women empowerment is an issue that is likewise open to debate. Her view of male and female roles is one that some people consider traditional in the sense of being antiquated and disgusting. In Mexico City, for instance, at an International Women's Year Conference, Mother Teresa unapologetically told women that there will be peace in their surroundings and consequently in the world if they fulfil their role in the home¹⁴⁴. The exhortation of women to be homemakers sounds like a deprivation of women's rights and an insult in the ears of some people. As well, on the heated topic of women ordination, she urged women to remain in their place following the example of Our Lady who would have been a better priest but remained in her own place¹⁴⁵. For her, women could still cooperate in the work of the Lord and be signs of joy, of love, and of peace, without being priests. These views and her total opposition to abortion make her detractors regard her as a demagogue, an obscurantist, and a servant of earthy powers¹⁴⁶ [the Vatican] with no interest in raising the status of women. However, Mother Teresa knew that abortion does not only destroy life, but equally causes mental disturbance to the

¹⁴³ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 133.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, p.151.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, p. 234.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. C. HITCHENS, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, p. 50.

woman who murders the innocent unborn child¹⁴⁷. In her reckoning then, the fight against abortion is as well a fight to emancipate women from the trauma into which abortion plunges them. This obviously is out of step with the views of revolutionaries who seek a radical shift in the role of women. A question thus arises whether a person with such views as Mother Teresa can be said to have contributed to the empowerment of women.

Without doubt, Mother Teresa talked about the distinction between some roles of women and men in the society. But this does not imply relegating women to the background. On the contrary, she believed in the equal dignity of men and women as the Church teaches: “Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men¹⁴⁸ have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity”¹⁴⁹. On the basis of the equal dignity of every human person, the Church warns against any form of social or cultural discrimination in the fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex or any other difference between people¹⁵⁰. It is unlikely that Mother Teresa who held tenaciously to the Church’s teachings would have supported the restraint of women. There are rather cases where she worked hard to raise the status of women.

In *Shushu Bhavan*¹⁵¹ and other homes founded to take care of underprivileged children, she ensured that girls were educated alongside boys. Girls who were not capable of pursuing regular studies were given some skill such as needlework or typing just as boys were taught carpentry or other handwork¹⁵². The aim of all this was to increase their chances of getting a job in life. Mother Teresa was not less enthusiastic

¹⁴⁷ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *An Open Letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai – Regarding the Freedom of Religion Bill 1978*, in <https://libslabyrinth.blogspot.com/2012/08/mother-terera-on-religious-freedom.html>, [accessed 07/09/2021].

¹⁴⁸ “Men” in this context is the plural form of “man” understood in a generic sense as mankind or human beings. It is not limited to the male members of the human species.

¹⁴⁹ CCC n. 1934.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, 29.

¹⁵¹ “Shushu Bhavan” in Hindu means a safe and loving place for children. It is the name Mother Teresa gave to the children’s home that she established Cf. MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Our Humble Works of Love* in, <https://missionariesofcharity.org/shishu-bhavan-for-children.html>, [accessed 23/09/2021].

¹⁵² Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 59.

when it came to older women. She appears to have assimilated the teachings about the dignity of human work even before John Paul II ever put them into writing. In spite of the toil that work sometimes entails, the Pope wrote in 1981: “Work is a good thing for man – a good thing for his humanity – because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes ‘more a human being’”¹⁵³. In order not to deprive them of the fulfilment that comes from work, Mother Teresa ensured that women who were reduced to begging along the streets had some work to do. That was the case of over two hundred thousand Bangladeshi women who were victims of the attack by West Pakistan troops that stormed Bangladesh in 1971 killing over three million people, and raping women and girls. Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity rushed to Bangladesh at the invitation of the government. To empower them, the sisters “opened clinics and gave practical training to women who were not equipped to fend for themselves without their men”¹⁵⁴. With the petty businesses that the sisters enabled these women to establish, they were able to provide for themselves and their children and also contribute to the advancement of their society.

Mother Teresa empowered women, above all, by the personal example of her own life. In a world that tends to underrate women, she never looked down on herself; she was not proud either. She rather regarded herself just as good as men are. This is clearly visible in her attitude towards life and others. Instead of only waiting for a male-dominated government to do something for the poor, the dying, and the street children, she trusted in her womanly abilities to ameliorate their situation. Her “success” in this endeavour earned her the recognition and cooperation of the highest offices in the city of Calcutta¹⁵⁵ and eventually throughout the world. She was not a kind of person who gets intimidated by positions. When a law was about to be passed in the Indian parliament that threatened religious freedom, the tiny-looking woman in her characteristic direct and courageous determination addressed the Prime Minister: “Mr Desai, you are so close to meeting God face to face. I wonder what answer you will give

¹⁵³ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Laborem Exercens*, Castel Gandolfo 1981, no. 9.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. M. GREENE, *Mother Teresa: A Biography*, p. 80.

for allowing the destruction of the life of the innocent unborn children and destroying the freedom to serve God, according to one's choice and belief"¹⁵⁶. This upfront and rare address from a woman served also as an invitation to the womenfolk to overcome fear and transcend the barriers culture imposes on them on account of their womanhood.

Not in India alone did Mother Teresa show herself an emancipated person. She visited the U.S. President Ronald Reagan and his wife at the White House on 4 June 1981 shortly after an attempt to kill the president. International press reported later that when the president was asked what he had told his guest he simply responded that he listened¹⁵⁷. That was the confidence of Mother Teresa to speak words of consolation to a man whom she saw not just as a president, but also as a human being in need of encouragement. The God of all consolation "supports us in every hardship, so that we are able to come to the support of others, in every hardship of theirs because of the encouragement that we ourselves receive from God" (2 Cor 1:3-4). This confidence is equally manifest in her close friendship with John Paul II. It was not Mother Teresa alone who benefitted from the relationship; this humble and courageous woman of faith also influenced the Holy Father. According to John Paul II, as his famous biographer, George Weigel, writes, Mother Teresa was a personal message for the twentieth century and a living confirmation that the law of the gift graven in human nature could be lived in a way that led to the most profound happiness¹⁵⁸. Clearly then, she was at home with statesmen, churchmen, journalists, business people, kings and queens as she was with the poorest of the poor in the streets of Calcutta. Beyond their position, wealth, social status, Mother Teresa saw human beings who, like her, were "created to love and be loved"¹⁵⁹.

Mother Teresa herself was inspired by another woman, Mary, who was courageous enough to surrender to the will of God. "You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happened to me as you have said" (Lk 1:38). With these words Mary

¹⁵⁶ MOTHER TERESA, *An Open Letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai – Regarding the Freedom of Religion Bill 1978*, in <https://libslabyrinth.blogspot.com/2012/08/mother-terera-on-religious-freedom.html>, [accessed 07/09/2021].

¹⁵⁷ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 184.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. G. WEIGEL, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II 1920-2005*, New York 2005, p. 513.

¹⁵⁹ MOTHER TERESA, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

accepted the divine call to be the Mother of God's own Son thereby setting an example for women of every age to utilize their God-given potentials. It was by such courage and obedience that Mary gave all the glory to God the Father¹⁶⁰. Constant devotion to her lent Mother Teresa the impetus to refuse God nothing even when God's will was very daunting. The readiness to do without reserve what God wanted of her made Mother Teresa famous for her works of charity.

At the same time, Mother Teresa was not afraid to admit that women are different from men. Realistically, she acknowledged that certain works or aspects of work are more suited to men than to women. To her, this was nothing to be ashamed of or to be apologetic about. When asked about the Missionary Brothers of Charity she replied: "We felt a need for men who would take care of the boys in the school and the men in the Home for the Dying. And there are other things that we as women cannot do for the men in the docks and so on"¹⁶¹. The establishment of the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity thus came from a realization of certain practical things which women could not do whereas men could. The above sufficiently demonstrate that Mother Teresa did contribute to the empowerment of women by raising their status, equipping them to make life-determining decisions and being for them an example of a fully emancipated woman. Above all, her example teaches that empowerment does not set women against men, but rather enhances the compatibility of the two sexes. Her work was not limited to India.

4.8. THE SPREAD OF HER MISSION OUTSIDE INDIA

Mother Teresa's works of charity followed the law of the good that naturally diffuses itself. No sooner had she set out for the slums than Mother Teresa understood that poverty is wider than material deprivation. This new and broader understanding of the concept of poverty means that the call to carry Christ "into the holes of the poor"¹⁶² was probably far more enormous than she initially thought. There were people suffering from one form of poverty or the other not in Calcutta alone, but also in other parts of

¹⁶⁰ Cf. MOTHER TERESA, *A Gift for God: Prayers and Meditations*, New York 1996, p. 49.

¹⁶¹ Mother Teresa in M. MUGGERIDGE, *Something Beautiful for God*, San Francisco 1986, p. 120.

¹⁶² MOTHER TERESA, *Come Be My Light*, p. 44.

India and indeed throughout the world. And in each poor person, Mother Teresa and her followers recognized Christ in his distressing disguise¹⁶³. The need was thus felt to extend their mission beyond India to wherever the suffering “Christ” could be found. It would become, in the words of Pope Paul VI, a universal mission of love¹⁶⁴. But for the first few years after the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity in 1950, the work of the sisters was restricted to the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Mother Teresa took the advantage of the restriction to properly instil the spirit of the congregation in the sisters. The spirit, for her, was as important as the work “for without the spirit the work would die”¹⁶⁵. Before it was exactly ten years since the Missionaries of Charity were established, Mother Teresa started receiving invitations to found houses in other dioceses in India.

As she responded to the invitations, the influence of her congregation gradually ramified in all directions, from Ranchi, Delhi and Jahnsi where first communities outside Calcutta were established in 1959 to other towns and cities across India. God was blessing the congregation with a growing number of sisters obedient to the core and prepared to go as directed. The spread of the Missionaries of Charity was given an added boost by the *Decretum Laudis*¹⁶⁶ which Pope Paul VI awarded to the congregation in 1965. As a congregation of pontifical right, it responded to many more requests from India and beyond; from bishops and government officials alike. Each invitation was reminiscent of the Macedonian’s call to Paul in a dream to “Come across to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9). And like the apostles commanded to go out and proclaim the gospel to the whole world (Cf. Mt 16:15), the sisters went without delay. They proclaimed the good news of Christ’s love not by word of mouth, but by their dedicated services to the poorest of the society.

¹⁶³ Cf. M. POPLIN, *Finding Calcutta: What Mother Teresa Taught Me about Meaningful Work and Service*, Downers Grove 2008, p. 35.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 81.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁶ *Decretum Laudis* is the Latin for “Decree of Praise”. It refers to the official measure with which the Holy See grants to institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life the recognition of ecclesiastical institution of pontifical right. When the congregation has grown in importance and when its spiritual and apostolic maturity is observed, it can be formally approved by the Pope with the *Decretum Laudis*, which transforms it into a congregation of pontifical right, subject to the immediate and exclusive authority of the Holy See. Cf. ANONYMOUS, *Decretum Laudis*, in https://hyperleap.com/topic/Decretum_lauidis, [accessed 06/10/2021].

The very first request to open a house outside India came from Bishop Benitez of Barquisimeto in Venezuela. An insufficient number of priests and religious was making many people in some isolated communities in his diocese to lapse in their Catholicism¹⁶⁷. He therefore solicited the pastoral assistance of Mother Teresa and her sisters. Following his invitation, the Missionary Sisters of Charity started a new foundation in Cocorote, Venezuela in July 1965. While there, the sisters worked particularly among women – training them in practical skills and raising among the women an awareness of their dignity as human persons. The sisters were also engaged in the preparation of children for First Communion and Confirmation, conducting funeral services and some of them were given permission to take Holy Communion to the sick¹⁶⁸.

The next community outside India was in Rome and the appeal to open it came from the Holy Father himself, Paul VI, who in 1968 entreated Mother Teresa to send her sisters to work among the poor in Rome. Subsequent appeals would lead to the opening of houses in Jordan, London, Bangladesh, Gaza, Peru, Tanzania, Melbourne, New York, Ethiopia, Poland, Cameroon, and several other places across the globe. In the places where they established, the Missionaries of Charity gave a response corresponding to the identified needs of the poor: “clinics for those suffering from tuberculosis, prenatal clinics, general dispensaries, mobile leprosy clinics, night shelters for homeless men, homes for abandoned children, homes for the dying and the destitute, nursery classes and crèches, primary schools, villages for lepers, commercial schools, training in carpentry, metal work, embroidery, needlework or other skills, child-care and home management, and aid in the event of emergencies and disasters arising from riots, epidemics, famine, and flooding”¹⁶⁹. It is clear from the nature of their services that the sisters could not do big things like changing social structures and dealing with the root causes of collective problems. But Mother Teresa’s principle was never to allow the immensity of what she could not do prevent her from doing the little she could. She did not reason in terms that gave priority to numbers or the magnitude of an action. She

¹⁶⁷ Cf. M. GREENE, *Mother Teresa: A Biography*, p. 96.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 97.

¹⁶⁹ K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 81.

could not hold back from giving one loaf of bread, if that was all she had, to a hungry child who needed two or more. Mother Teresa was a woman who believed in small beginnings. She was wont to instruct the people working with her: “Don’t look for numbers. Every small act of love for the unwanted and the poor is important to Jesus”¹⁷⁰. And because of this way of thinking and acting, the needs of many needed people were attended to. The gusto with which Mother Teresa first went into the slums after she left Loreto accompanied her through her life, and continues to accompany her sisters till today.

4.9. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, Mother Teresa’s love and concern for the poor was so great that she abandoned Loreto, against all odds, to serve them in the slums. Assured of the providence of God who had commanded her to take him to the poor, she founded Missionaries of Charity with whom she ministered to the needs of the poor in Calcutta, other parts of India, and the whole world. Their work testifies to the poor of society that they too matter in the eyes of God. Mother Teresa did more than what is captured in these few pages; but it is hoped that what has been written suffices to reveal the kind of person Mother Teresa was, her vision of the religious life, and the spirit with which she carried out her work. Mother Teresa’s work was certainly motivated by her love of God; at the same time, her understanding of the human person contributed a lot to her dedication to the poor.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. K. SPINK, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, p. 88.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Mother Teresa of Calcutta lived and worked, like almost any other person, among fellow human beings. Her love and concern for the frail and the poor, those generally regarded as liabilities by the society that has become increasingly utilitarian, however, made her way of life fairly distinctive. Whether her activities were noble deeds done for the sole purpose of helping those in need or they were done for some ulterior motive where any benefits to the poor were merely incidental was not the immediate concern of this study. The research, however, has clearly shown that her presence and work among the poor were seen by these forgotten members of the society as god-sent. Presupposing that her understanding of what it means to be human contributed to her sympathetic attitude towards the poor, this study has explored her anthropological vision and the influence such a vision had on her spirituality. Some of the basic questions asked and answered are: what was Mother Teresa's background and how did it influence her understanding of the human being? How did Mother Teresa understand the human being in reality? What particular way of life did she adopt for herself and her followers, and how did her conception of man shape this way of life? What did Mother Teresa actually do given her particular understanding of man and her spirituality? It is evident from the study that Christian anthropology is the subtext of all of Mother Teresa's charitable activities that constitute the hallmark of her spirituality.

The first chapter reveals the influence Mother Teresa's family, their parish community and the general trends in the Church had on her future life as a religious. Both human and Christian values were inculcated into young Teresa at home. She learned, for instance, to respect and to be charitable to every human person especially the vulnerable from her own parents. She inherited from her father the resilience which enabled her to not give up in the face of harsh criticisms or difficulties, and from her mother she learned disdain for waste of any sort. Growing up in a family in which members invoked God together in every situation, Mother Teresa learned the indispensability of prayer for any meaningful living. She used to draw from her own family's experience to encourage couples to pray together since "the family that prays together, stays together". Similarly, she picked up the importance of sacraments in the

life of a person from her background. Values and character traits inherited from her family were clearly visible in Mother Teresa's life as a religious. The knowledge about missionary work and how to become a missionary was something she got from priests working in their parish; true men of God who encouraged and assisted the young people around them in the discernment of their vocations in life. Beyond Mother Teresa's family and parish community, the cosmopolitan nature of Skopje, her hometown, and Calcutta where she eventually settled as a religious sister gave her an opportunity to live among, and interact with, people of diverse cultural, social, philosophical and religious backgrounds who had visions of the human being shaped by their various backgrounds.

In the Hindu culture which is the dominant Indian culture, for instance, man is defined essentially as a soul inhabiting the body. In social relationships, however, man is perceived largely through the lens of his vocation or duty to the community and how well he performs it. People are thus classified into castes (Jatis and/or Varnas) with members of the higher castes enjoying privileges that those in the lower castes do not. However, it can be concluded with certainty from the evidences presented in the study that the basic doctrine about the human being that underlies Mother Teresa's spirituality is Christian. She had been taught the Christian ideal right from their home that human beings are to be treated with reverence and compassion irrespective of their life situation.

Chapter two exposes the anthropology that governs Mother Teresa's spirituality. According to this vision, the human being is a creature created by God in his image and likeness, and as such is God's steward over all creation. The implication of this is that no human being is a result of some blind and unguided forces, but rather is thought and willed by God. Human dignity is thus something innate. Concerning the structure of man, the study exposes the teaching that human nature is comprised of two basic components: the body and the soul. Since "body" and "soul" make up what it means to be human, the well-being of the whole man demands that they both be taken care of. Additionally, the human being is considered a child of God and a sibling of Jesus Christ since he comes from God and is called to communion with him. To fully live out his vocation to be united with God, man needs the assistance of the Holy Spirit given by the

Father and the Son. Mother Teresa emphasizes the perception of man as Christ in disguise, basing herself on Christ's own words. Thus, whatever is done to a fellow human being, especially the least, is done ultimately to Christ. This realization that Christ is somehow present in every human being is the acme of Mother Teresa's anthropology. To try to understand the human being without Christ is to miss the core of that anthropology; and without this core, Mother Teresa's life and mission are incomprehensible. In Mother Teresa's thought, anthropology and Christology overlap. This understanding of the human person differs essentially from that in Indian thought in which Christ does not come into the picture. Mother Teresa's long stay in India helped her appreciate how other people understand the human being, but it did not succeed to persuade her from the Christian understanding of man.

Chapter three proves that Mother Teresa's understanding of man gave rise to a particular way of life which allowed her to answer to the needs of suffering humanity. Her spirituality is the way she understood and lived within the context of Calcutta the Christian ideal of love for each and every human person especially the poorest of the poor. And for her, poverty is not just the question of material deprivation. Rather, it refers to the deficiency of anything necessary for a dignified human life. Four types of what Mother Teresa means by poverty are identified in this work: material poverty, intellectual poverty, affective poverty, and physical poverty. Her spirituality takes all this into consideration. Within the complex of the givens of faith, the Teresan school of spirituality has the specific goal of going out to the streets to minister to the homeless, the sick, the orphaned, the unwanted, the lepers, the unloved and the uncared for. We can say that we are dealing with an identifying spirituality in which one recognizes and unites oneself with Christ present in people in need according to the words of Christ in Mt 25: 31-46. But following this way of life is not a mere social service. In serving the poor, one is at the same time working for one's own sanctification and salvation, and for God's glory. Following Mother Teresa's way of life is thus a strife to become holy by working for God and with God among the most vulnerable members of the society, and also helping those for whom one works to equally come in close union with God. For this reason, Mother Teresa never considered herself or her sisters as social workers. Success or rather faithfulness in this way of life demands a profound prayer and

sacramental life, spiritual direction, and fidelity to the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and the vow of wholehearted free service to the poor. The spirituality Mother Teresa established for herself and her followers is quite unique. Nonetheless, it is not utterly new since it is basically Christian spirituality grounded in Christian understanding of man and moulded with elements drawn from Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Tradition, and the life of saints. As Mother Teresa's own life reveals, this spirituality has the potentials of helping the person who practices it grow in virtues such as the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Chapter four focused on the work Mother Teresa did for the poor, and for which she became famous. When she was still a Loreto sister, she was sensitive to the sufferings of the poor people. On account of the lofty idea she had of the human being, Mother Teresa became ill at ease with the squalor in which she beheld thousands and even millions of people living around her. How could the dying be abandoned to die alone without any love? How could children be allowed to roam the streets without anyone to care for them? How could the old be forgotten in their homes? Mother Teresa was bombarded with questions for which she had no answers. The consciousness of the poor conditions in which people, images of God, were living and the call she received to quench Christ's thirst made Mother Teresa realize that she could best unite herself with God by dedicating her life to work for the improvement of their condition. Over and above the poverty of the poor, she recognized their humanity. They were not made less human by their economic situation, their castes, and the *karma* they were believed to have. So, instead of despising and ignoring them, she decided to do something to improve their situation. Her desire was to see them live with the dignity of the children of God.

It was a difficult and dangerous venture, but she preferred to be vulnerable with and for the poor than to be protected behind convent walls. She therefore advocated for a more "incarnational" approach to missionary work where the sisters would become one with the poor in order to assist in the enhancement of their dignity. She was of the conviction that spirituality does not imply abandonment of the everyday world but rather a way of being and acting in the world according to the inspiration of God's Spirit. This

finally led to her departure from Loreto and the foundation of Missionaries of Charity. She and her followers were to live in such a way as to be able to meet the poor wherever they were and to attend to them. The historical conditions of Calcutta where she lived determined the basic concepts and structure of the spirituality that she and her followers practised.

This research was designed to examine the bases of Mother Teresa's spirituality, but it is limited in several ways. First, although many factors (temperament, gender, social context, level of education, just to name a few) account for any kind of spirituality, the nature of this study limits the study to the anthropological basis. Additionally, human beings differ from each other in many respects, and these differences influence their spirituality, but the study concentrates on the human being as such. Investigating some of these factors: how Mother Teresa's femininity, for example, shaped her spirituality could yield interesting results. Further research could, as well, examine her spirituality within the social context in which it sprang up. Another limitation results from the manner of conducting the study – it is all based on library and online research. It could be more informative to interview people who encountered Mother Teresa personally.

In spite of the limitations, results of the study confirm that spirituality is consequent upon human nature, and not something extraneous to man. Likewise, they cast an additional ray of light on the motive of Mother Teresa's works of charity. She wanted to help Christ whose presence she perceived in every person she encountered. The study challenges any utilitarian attitude that values each human being on the basis of his usefulness, and makes some people to appear to be more human than others. Instead, it reveals the concept of man that is universal in the sense that human beings are all of equal dignity irrespective of what one does or has or how one looks. Thus, the result of this study may be useful in combating eugenics, racism, modern forms of slavery, and other social ills built on a false anthropology. Since it has pulled together ideas of Mother Teresa's anthropology and spirituality, the study may be useful in the formation of candidates to join the Missionaries of Charity and of any other persons who desire to live according to Mother Teresa's vision of life. Finally, her dedication and

service to the poor revealed by this work showcases the practicality of the Church's social doctrine about the option for the poor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. BIBLES

Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu: Biblia Rodzinna, Częstochowa 2014.

The New Jerusalem Bible: Study Edition, London 1994.

The Bible: Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, Houston 2018.

2. CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church, London 1997.

Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition, Washington, D.C. 1995.

CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors*, Vatican City 2011.

VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition, Dublin 1998, [799-812].

_____, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition, Dublin 1998, [903-1001].

_____, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition, Dublin 1998, [350-426].

_____, Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition, Dublin 1998, [611-655].

_____, Introduction of the Rite of Initiation to the Religious Life, *Sacris Religionis Vinculis*, in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, Dublin 1982, [190-192].

3. PAPAL DOCUMENTS

BENEDICT XV, Apostolic Letter, *Maximum Illud*, Rome 1919.

PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter, *Quas Primas*, Rome 1925.

_____, Bull of the Canonization of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, *Vehementer Exultamus Hodie*, Rome 1925.

_____, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, Rome 1926.

PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Rome 1943.

JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris*, Rome 1963.

PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter, *Humanae Vitae*, Rome 1968.

_____, Apostolic Letter, *Solemni Hac Liturgia*, Rome 1968.

JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, Rome 1981.

_____, Encyclical Letter, *Laborem Exercens*, Castel Gandolfo 1981.

_____, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Rome 1996.

BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, Rome 2005.

FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter, *Authenticum Charismatis*, Rome 2020.

4. PAPAL HOMILIES AND PRIVATE LETTERS

JOHN PAUL II, Homily on the Beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 19th October 2003, in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20031019_mother-theresa.html, [accessed 20/07/2021].

_____, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)* in: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031019_madre-teresa_en.html, [accessed 26/08/20].

_____, *Letter to Sister M. Nirmala Joshi M.C., Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Missionaries of Charity*, in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20001017_missionaries-charity.html, [accessed 22/08/ 2021].

FRANCIS, Homily at the Canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 4th September 2016, in https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160904_omelia-canonizzazione-madre-teresa.html, [accessed 20/07/2021].

5. SOURCES

MOTHER TERESA, *A Gift for God: Prayers and Meditations*, New York 1996.

_____, *An Open Letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai – Regarding the Freedom of Religion Bill 1978*, in <https://libslabyrinth.blogspot.com/2012/08/mother-terera-on-religious-freedom.html>, [accessed 07/09/2021].

_____, *Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the “saint of Calcutta”*, New York 2007.

_____, *Co-Workers of Mother Teresa*, in <https://motherteresa.org/international-movement-of-co-workers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Do Something Beautiful for God: The Essential Teachings of Mother Teresa*, Florida 2019.

_____, *La Mia Vita [My Life]*, Milano 1990.

_____, “Letter of Mother Teresa to President George Bush and President Saddam Hussein,” in H. J. KUDO, *Mother Teresa: A Saint from Skopje*, Anand 2006.

_____, *Nobel Lecture*, in <https://icln.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mother-Teresa-Nobel-peace-prize-speech.pdf>, [accessed 03/09/2021].

_____, *Where There Is Love, There Is God*, B. Kolodiejchuk (ed.), New York 2010.

6. WRITINGS ABOUT MOTHER TERESA

ALPION Gëzim, *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?*, London and New York 2007.

_____, *The Emergence of Mother Teresa as a Religious Visionary and the Initial Resistance to Her Charism/a: A Sociological and Public Theological Perspective*, “International Journal of Public Theology” 8(2014), [25-50].

ANNAMMA Madavath, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Prophetic Inspiration to the Women in India*, Bangalore 2016.

CHATTERJEE Aroup, *Mother Teresa: The Untold Story*, New Delhi 2016.

CHAWLA Navin, *Mother Teresa*, London 2002.

CHIDIAC Anthony, *The Spirituality of Mother Teresa*, “The Australasian Catholic Record” 93 (2016), [469-477].

DAVIES Rachel, *Poverty and Interiority in Mother Teresa*, “Theological Studies” 80 (2019), [967-985].

EGAN Eileen, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa –The Spirit and the Work*, New York 1986.

GAUTHIER Jacques, *I Thirst: St Therese and Mother Teresa*, New York 2005.

GJERGIJ Lush, *A Samaritan of Mercy*, in <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/samaritan-of-mercy-5802>, [accessed 16/07/2021].

GRAY Charlotte, *Mother Teresa*, Burn Hill 1990.

GREENE Meg, *Mother Teresa: A Biography*, Westport 2004.

HITCHENS Christopher, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, London 1995.

HOWDEN Iris, *Mother Teresa*, London 1998.

JACKMAN Wayne, *Mother Teresa*, East Sussex, UK: Wayland 1993.

LARIVÉE Serge – SÉNÉCHAL Carole – CHÉNARD Geneviève, *Les côtés ténébreux de Mère Teresa*, “Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses” 42 (2013), [319-345].

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, *Missionaries of Charity* in <https://www.missionariesofcharity.org/notification.html>, [accessed 19/07/2021].

_____, *Missionaries of Charity – Brothers*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-brothers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Missionaries of Charity Brothers – Contemplatives*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-contemplative-brothers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Missionaries of Charity – Fathers*, in <https://motherteresa.org/missionaries-of-charity-fathers.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Our Co-Workers*, in <https://missionariesofcharity.org/our-co-workers.html>, [assesse 16/05/2022].

_____, *Missionaries of Charity – Priest Associates*, in <https://motherteresa.org/corpus-christi-movement-for-priests.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Missionaries of Charity Sisters – Contemplatives*, in <https://motherteresa.org/contemplative-sisters.html>, [accessed 22/08/2021].

_____, *Our Humble Works of Love* in, <https://missionariesofcharity.org/shishu-bhavan-for-children.html>, [accessed 23/09/2021].

MORARIU Marius, *Aspects of Political Theology in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, “HTS Teologiese studies/Theological Studies” 76(1).

MUGGERIDGE Malcom, *Something Beautiful for God*, San Francisco 1986.

Murzaku Ines, *Mother Teresa: Saint of the Peripheries*, New York 2021.

POPLIN Mary, *Finding Calcutta: What Mother Teresa Taught Me about Meaningful Work and Service*, Downers Grove 2008.

PORTER David, *Mother Teresa: The Early Years*, Oxford and New York 1986.

RUSZALA Michael, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, LLC 2017.

SCHAEFER Linda, *Come and See: A Photojournalist’s Journey into the World of Mother Teresa*, Sanford 2003.

SEBBA Anne, *Mother Teresa: Beyond the Image*, London 1997.

SLAVICEK Louise, *Mother Teresa: Caring for the World’s Poor*, New York 2007.

SPINK Kathryn, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography*, New York 2011.

WILLIAMS Taylor, *Illness Narrative, Depression, and Sainthood: An Analysis of the Writings of Mother Teresa*, “Journal of Religion and Health” 53(2014), [290-297].

ZALESKI Carol, *The Dark Night of Mother Teresa*, “First Things” 133 (2003), [24-24].

7. SUPPORTING LITERATURE

7.1. THEOLOGICAL WORKS

ACKLIN Thomas –HICKS Boniface, *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for Sharing the Father’s Love*, Steubenville 2017.

AMBROSE, *Letter*, in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/340963.htm>, [accessed 07/06/2022].

ANONYMOUS, *Decretum Laudis*, in https://hyperleap.com/topic/Decretum_laudis, [accessed 06/10/2021].

ANONYMOUS, *Didache*, in, <https://earlychurch.com/the-didache/>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, *Proslogion* 1, in: B. DAVIES (ed.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Oxford 1998.

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, 7, 6., in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1702.htm>, [accessed 03/06/2022].

_____, *The Confessions*, in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

AUMANN Jordan, *Spiritual Theology*, London 2017.

BARRON Robert, *Light from Light: A Theological Reflection on the Nicene Creed*, Park Ridge 2021.

BARRY William – CONNOLLY William, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, New York 1983.

BENEDICT XVI – SARAH Robert, *From the Depths of Our Hearts*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2020.

BENEDICT XVI, *A School of Prayer: The Saints Show Us How to Pray*, trans. L'Osservatore Romano, San Francisco 2013.

_____, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, [Part Two], trans. P. Whitmore, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2011.

BOUYER Louis, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, trans. M. Perkins, Notre Dame, Indiana 2013.

BREGMAN Lucy, *Defining Spirituality: Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term*, “The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling” 58 (2004), [157-167].

BRIERLEY Justin, *Unbelievable?: Why, after Ten Years of Talking with Atheist, I'm still a Christian*, London 2017.

BURROWS Mark, *Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) On Loving God*, in: A. HOLDER (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*, Abingdon 2010.

COMERFORD Brendan, *The Pilgrim's Story: The Life and Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola*, Chicago 2021.

CORDILEONE Salvatore, *A Pastoral Letter on the Human Dignity of the Unborn, Holy Communion, and Catholics in Public Life*, in <https://sfarch.org/inthewomb>, [accessed 04/05/2021].

CUNNINGHAM Lawrence – EGAN Keith, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*, New York 1996.

DAWKINS Richard, *The God Delusion*, London 2006.

DE CAUSSADE Jean Pierre, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, trans. Dom Arnold, Grand Rapids 1921.

DREHER Rod, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*, New York 2017.

D'SA Francis, *Trinitarian Evil – The Bhagavadgita's Understanding of Evil*, "Dialogue & Alliance" 8(1994), [12-25].

FEINGOLD Lawrence, *Faith comes from what is heard: An Introduction to Fundamental Theology*, Ohio 2016.

FOSTER Richard – BEEBE Gayle, *Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion*, London 2009.

GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Making of Man*, IV,1, in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022]

HAUGHT John, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*, London 2008.

HITCHENS Christopher, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, New York 2007.

HOLMES Stephen, *God*, in: M. DAVIE et alii (ed.), *New Dictionary of Theology* [2nd Edition], Downers Grove 2016, [369-372].

HORBAN Oleksandr et alii, *Theological Anthropology: Open Questions of the Greek Spiritual Tradition*, "ASTRA Salvensis" 1(2020), [25-36].

IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, Bk V, 16,2., in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103516.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

ISAIAH in *The Sayings of Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, trans. B. Ward, Kalamazoo.

JANZ Denis, *World Christianity and Marxism*, New York 1998.

JASTRZEBSKI Andrzej, *On Some Anthropological Foundations of Spirituality*, “*Verbum Vitae*” 37/2 (2020), [381-390].

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on the Gospel of St Matthew*, 79, 2. in, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2914.htm>, [accessed, 03/06/2022].

JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. C. LUIBHEID – N. RUSSEL, New York 1982.

JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Dark Night*, II, 3.3., trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Washington, D.C. 2017.

KITTLE Gerhard – FRIEDRICH Gerhard (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. Bromiley, [Abridged in one volume], [46-47].

LADARIA Luis, CHRISTIAN *Anthropology*, in: R. LATOURELLE – R. FISICHELLA (ed.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York 1994. [21-27].

LENNOX John, *2084: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*, Grand Rapids 2020.

LEWIS Clive, *Mere Christianity*, London 2016.

_____, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, New York 1978.

_____, *The Great Divorce*, London 1946.

LOUTH Andrew, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, New York 2007.

LYNN Terry et alii, *Spirituality and Religiousness: A Diversity of Definitions*, “*Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*” 13 (2011), [158-181].

MARGUERITE Shuster, *The Mystery of Original Sin: We don't Know Why God Permitted the Fall, but We Know all too well the Evil and Sin that still Plagues Us*, “*Christianity Today*” 57(2013), [38-41].

MCBRIEN Richard, *Catholicism*, New York 1994.

NOUWEN Henri – CHRISTENSEN Michael – LAIRD Rebecca, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith*, San Francisco 2015.

O'BRIEN Thomas (ed.), *Corpus Dictionary of the Western Churches*, Washington, D.C. 1970, [140-142].

OLIVER Simon, *Theodicy*, in: M. DAVIE et alii (ed.), *New Dictionary of Theology* [2nd Edition], Downers Grove 2016, [897- 899].

OSPINO Hosffman, *Interculturalism and Catechesis: A Catechist's Guide to Responding to Cultural Diversity*, New London 2017.

PAŁUCKI Jerzy, *The Concept of Person in the Church of the first Century*, "Personalism" 6(2004), [77-92].

PATTERSON Colin, *Chalcedonian Personalism: Rethinking the Human*, Berlin 2016.

PINCKAERS Servais, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. M. Thomas, Washington, D.C. 1995.

PRINCIPE Walter, *Christian Spirituality*, in: M. Downey (ed.), *The Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Collegeville 1993, [931-938].

_____, *Towards Defining Spirituality*, "Studies in Religion" 12 (1983), [127-141].

RATZINGER Joseph, *'In the Beginning...': A Catholic Understanding of Creation and the Fall*, trans. B. Ramsey, London 1990.

_____, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. Foster – J. Miller, San Francisco 2004.

SARAH Robert, *God or Nothing*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2015.

_____, *The Day is Now Far Spent*, trans. J. Miller, San Francisco 2019.

SHELDRAKE Philip, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, Chichester 2013.

TANQUEREY Adolphe, *The Spiritual Life*, trans. H. Branderis, Brattleboro 2015.

TATAR Marek, *Anthropological Bases on the Path to the Sanctification of Man*, "Studia Theologica Varsaviensia", (2020) [115-119].

_____, *Between Spirituality and Psychology: Friends or Enemies?*, in M. TATAR (ed.), *Kryzys w Człowieku Człowiek w Kryzysie: Crisis in Man, Man in Crisis*, Sandomierz 2022.

_____, *Duchowość Pokoju w Teologii Kardynała Basila Hume'a*, Warszawa 2013.

_____, *Structure of Man in the Biblical Act of Creation*, "Analecta Cracoviensia" 44 (2012), [192-198].

TERESA OF AVILA, *Interior Castle*, VI, 1.3. trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017.

_____, *Meditations on the Song of Songs*, 3, 1, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017.

_____, *The Way of Perfection*, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 2017.

THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*, trans. J. Clarke, Trivandrum 2016.

THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, in:
<https://ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa/summa?queryID=20025934&resultID=686>,
[accessed 04/06/2022]

THURIAN Max, *The Theological Basis for Priestly Celibacy*, in
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_theol_en.html, [accessed 07/06/2022].

TRIGG Roger, *Theological Anthropology*, in: P. BYRNE – L. HOULDEN (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, London 2003.

TUREK Frank, *Stealing from God: Why Atheist Need God to Make their Case*, Carol Stream 2015.

VERMEERBCH Arthur, *Religion obedience*, in
<https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/Religious-Obedience>, [accessed 19/06/2022].

VERSCHUUREN Gerard, *A Catholic Scientist Proves God Exists*, Manchester 2019.

WEIGEL George, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II 1920-2005*, New York 2005.

WHYBRAY Roger, *Genesis*, in J. BARTON – J. MUDDISON (ed.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, New York 2001.

ZAWILLA Ronald, *Dominican Spirituality*, in: M. Downey (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Minnesota 1993, [286-294].

7.2. NON-THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

ACHEBE Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, Portsmouth 1958.

AHUJA Amit – OSTERMANN Susan, *Crossing Caste Boundaries in Modern Indian Marriage Market*, “Studies in Comparative International Development” 3(2016), [365-387].

ANONYMOUS, *The New Penguin Dictionary of Biology*, M. Abercrombie et alii (ed.), 8th edition, Middlesex 1990, [263-265].

ATKINSON Walker, *Reincarnation and the Law of Karma*, Hollister 2010.

AUGUSTYN Adam et alii, *Jati* in <https://www.britannica.com/topic/jati-Hindu-caste>, [accessed 08/03/2021].

BAGGINI Julian, *Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2003.

BAILEY Frederick, *Caste and the Economic Frontier: A Village in Highland Orissa*, Manchester 1957.

_____, *Tribe, Caste and Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa*, Manchester 1960.

BAYLY Susan, *The New Cambridge History of India*, IV. 3, Cambridge 2008.

BROWN Dan, *Origin*, New York 2017.

BUNNIN Nicholas –YU Jiyuan, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Malden 2004.

Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, The Current situation of Dalits, especially in Punjab; and any protest rallies held by dalits in Punjab in 1997 and 1998 and subsequent reaction by the authorities, 1 April 1999, IND 31487.E, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3914.html>, [accessed 06/03/2022].

CHAIRY Chairy – SYAHRIVAR Jhanghiz, *You Reap What You Sow: The Role of Karma in Green Purchase*, “Cogent Business & Management” 1(2020).

ELLIOTT Peter, *The Sexual Revolution: History – Ideology – Power*, Bayswater 2020.

FONLON Bernard, *The Genuine Intellectual*, Yaoundé 1978.

FRANCIS Anthony et alii, *Religion and Conflict Attribution: An Empirical Study of the Religious Meaning System of Christian, Muslim and Hindu Students in Tamil Nadu, India*, Boston 2015.

GIDLA Sujatha, *Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India*, New York 2017.

GRIHAULT Nicki, *Culture Smart! India*, London 2006.

HOWARD Veena, *Rethinking Gandhi's Celibacy: Ascetic Power and Women's Empowerment*, "Journal of the American Academy of Religion" 81(2013), [130-161].

JADHAV Narendra, *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India*, New York 2003.

KAUSAR Zeenath, *Communal Riots in India: Hindu-Muslim Conflict and Resolution*, "Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs" 3(2006) [353-370].

KOPALLE Praveen et alii, *Consumer Expectations and Culture: The Effects of Belief in Karma in India*, "Journal of Consumer Research" 2(2010), [251-263].

LAJPAT Lala, *Europeanization and the Ancient Culture of India*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 145 (1929), [188-195].

LEA Diana et al (ed.), *Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English*, Oxford 2014.

MAKELA Michelle, *The Nemo Dat Rule* in, <https://www.armstronglegal.com.au/commercial-law/the-nemo-dat-rule/>, [accessed 25/05/2022].

MANOR James, *'Ethnicity' and Politics in India*, "International Affairs" 3(1996), [459-475].

MASLOW Abraham, *Motivation and Personality*, New York 1954.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>, [accessed 09/09/2021].

MONDAL Puja, *Caste Mobility: Caste Mobility in India*, in <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-stratification/caste-mobility-caste-mobility-in-india/39162>, [accessed 04/12/20].

_____, *Essay on Mobility in the Caste System of India*, in <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/india-2/essay-on-mobility-in-the-caste-system-of-india/4090>, [accessed 04/12/2020].

NEDUMPARA Jose, *Dominant Caste System in Rural India*, “Rajagiri Journal of Social Development” 5(2013), [23-38].

NIETZSCHE Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, trans. J. Nauckhoff, Cambridge 2008.

Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India,
http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx, [accessed 18/07/ 2019]

OWENS Candace, *5 Reasons I am No Longer Pro-Choice*, in
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-gRm92ZDno>, 3:12 [accessed 28/06/2022].

KUHLENBECK Mike, *The Humanist Interview with Hemley Gonzalez*, “Humanist” 74 (2014) [26-29].

PANDEY Rajiv et alii (ed.), *Geography of India*, Haldwani 2017.

PARIONA Ameber, *What is the India Subcontinent?* in
<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-indian-subcontinent.html>, [accessed 15/09/20].

PLECHER Hans, *Largest Countries in the World*, *Largest Countries in the World*, in
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/262955/largest-countries-in-the-world/>, [accessed 15/09/20].

PLETCHER Kenneth, *One-Child Policy*, in <https://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>, [accessed 02/09/2021].

PREUS Anthony, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Lanham 2007.

RADHAKRISHNAN Sarvepalli, *Culture of India*, “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” 233 (1944), [18-21].

RADHAKRISHNAN Sarvepalli – MOORE Charles, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton 1957.

RAHMAN Maseeh, *Indian Leader Likens Caste system to apartheid Regime*, in
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/28/india.mainsection>, [accessed 07/03/2021].

SARKAR Sumit, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, New York 1989.

SHAFFER David – KIP Katherine, *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence*, 8 edn, Wadsworth 2007.

SHARMA Kanhaya, *Is there Today Caste System or there is only Caste in India?*, “Polish Sociological Review” 178 (2012), [246-263].

SHELLEY Percy, *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, Baltimore 2004.

SHVILI Jason, *The Most Populated Countries in the World*, in <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-most-populated-countries-in-the-world.html>, [accessed 16/09/20].

SRINIVAS Mysore, *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays*, Oxford 1994.

STEVENS Paul – SAPRA Rahul, *Akbar's Dream: Moghul Toleration and English/British Orientalism*, "Modern Philosophy" 104, n. 3 (2007), [379-411].

SZCZEPANSKI Kallie, *The British Raj in India*, in <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-british-raj-in-india-195275>, [accessed 24/09/2020].

TRUEMAN Carl, 'Love Withers under Constraint': How the Poet Percy Shelley Foreshadowed the Sexual Revolution of the 960s, "Christianity Today" 66(2022), [72-75].

VISWANATH Rupa, *The Pariah Problem*, New York 2014.

WOLPERT Stanley, *British Raj*, in <https://www.britannica.com/event/British-raj>, [accessed 22/09/2020].

WOODBURNE Angus, *The Present Religious Situation in India*, "The Journal of Religion" 3 (1923), [387-397].

ZACHARIA Paul, *The Surprisingly Early History of Christianity in India*, "Smithsonian Journeys Quarterly", February 19, 2016 in <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/how-christianity-came-to-india-kerala-180958117/>. [accessed 25/07/2019].