



LENT:

The Most *Action*-packed
Time of the Year AKA
Operation Easter Blessings
APRIL 2014

THEME/TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

Lent: It's the most "ACTION-packed" time of the year! Aka Operation Easter Blessings

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES OF THE MONTH:

Matthew 25:40 "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you do to the least of your brethren, you do unto me."

TEACHING OF THE MONTH:

Lent to the Max: ALMSGIVING and Building the Church of the Poor (Part 3 of a 3-part series) (See attachment)

DISCUSSION QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What emotions does the existence of poverty in the world stir up in your heart? What might need to change in your heart in order to respond to the cry of the poor?

SONG OF THE MONTH:

Fearless composed by Bimbo Yerro (CFC)

(Beautiful song composed by our very own CFC Bimbo Yerro. Suggest you listen to and meditate on the song before going through the teaching; see attachment for song lyrics) Click on the link below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X1pP6mOEsg>

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PARAGRAPHS OF THE MONTH:

Love for the Poor CCC 2544-2547

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, now of Heaven

PRAYER OF THE MONTH:

Lenten Prayer

MEDIA (TV/CD/BOOK/MOVIE) OF THE MONTH:

Passion of the Christ (by Mel Gibson)

(Note: Watch this movie ALONE preferably during Holy Week. Make this your one-on-one with Jesus)

IPHONE/SMARTPHONE APP OF THE MONTH:

iBreviary (FREE App)

APPLICATION OF THE MONTH: "FAITH WITHOUT ACTION IS DEAD"

Operation Easter Blessings – Sponsor/Adopt an ANCOP CSP NOW!!!

April 1, 2014

Subject: 2014 CFCUSA – Lent: The Most ACTION-packed Time of the Year Aka Operation Easter Blessings (ROH#6)

Dear CFC Family:

From the most PONDER-full to the most ACTION-packed time of the year! This for us is Lent, the CFC way! Our Mission: Operation Easter Blessings (more on this later)!

As we continue our Lenten journey with fervent prayer through quiet meditation, Scripture readings, the Holy Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration and daily Mass; as well as through acts of penance or fasting - of the eyes, tongue, palate and most importantly turning away from sin, now is the time to put into concrete action the fruit of these Lenten observances- ALMSGIVING.

This Lent, God is giving us the opportunity to do something beautiful for Him....through CFC, through ANCOP...by Building the Church of the Poor.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta was able to accomplish her calling of serving the poor because she knew her identity. She stated: “By blood and origin, I am Albanian. My citizenship is Indian. I am a Catholic Nun. As to my calling, I belong to the whole world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus.”

She added, “Your vocation is not to work for the poor. Your vocation is to belong to Jesus. The work for the poor is only your love for Christ in action ... That is the completion of your vocation, of your belonging to Christ.”

Why ANCOP? There are lots of “the Poor”, the poor of Haiti, the poor of Ethiopia, the poor supported by the various Catholic groups like Food for

the Poor or Gawad Kalinga. But right now, God has gifted us with our beautiful community of CFC and He has given us our own poor to love, our own children to educate, our own homeless to provide shelter, our own sick to heal....God gave us ANCOP.

How have we (CFC USA) responded last year (2013) as a community of believers in giving life opportunity to the poor through education with our Child Sponsorship Program (CSP)? God gave us a goal of 1,600 students in need. We responded with 543 students. That's 34% of the goal. That's less than 10% of our CFC USA members who availed of this wonderful opportunity to give back to God. God deserves much, much more from us.

What is our plan to achieve or even surpass our 2014 goal of 2,450 (from 1,600) CSP students and 200 Community Development Program (CDP) homes? Operation Easter Blessings!

Let us all pray that each CFC couple, each Handmaid of the Lord, each Servant of the Lord and each Single for Christ adopt and sponsor (or pledge to adopt/sponsor) at least one child for the ANCOP Child Sponsorship program by the end of the Easter season culminating in the birthday of our Church – Pentecost Sunday (June 8, 2014)!

Let us all pray that each CFC-Y youth and KFC kid will share his/her allowance and savings so that each CFCY and KFC Chapter can adopt/sponsor at least one child each by the end of the Easter season culminating in the birthday of our Church – Pentecost Sunday (June 8, 2014)!

In addition, let us pray that each CFC, SFC, HOLD, SOLD, CFCY, KFC Chapter enthusiastically and prayerfully discern, plan and implement at least one major activity to raise awareness and funds for the ANCOP Community Development Program (CDP) by the end of 2014.

In addition, please have this as a theme of your assemblies, teachings and household meetings this month of April. Let us all create awareness and ensure that ALL our CFC brethren are given this wonderful opportunity to give back to God.

The key to the success of Operation Easter Blessings is instant obedience to God. Right after the assembly, teaching or household meeting, fill out that pledge form. Do NOT delay as by the time you leave the venue, the evil one will put doubts into your mind (Are you sure you can afford it?), the world will distract you (Think of your work deadline first) and the flesh will deceive you (What about the Benz you have been dreaming about?). It may hurt for some but God is asking- Do you TRUST me? I urge you brothers and sisters to TRUST GOD act on it NOW by clicking on or typing this website link: <http://www.ancopusa.org/sponsor>

By the end of the Easter season, we can all be a great blessing to thousands of poor children and hundreds of in-need families, and knowing how we can never outdo the generosity of God, I am positive that God will shower us with a deluge of blessings in this life and for all eternity! May Our Blessed Mother's "Yes" be our "Yes!"

In Christ through Mary,
Bro. Toffee Jeturian

P.S. This and all previous Reflections of the Heart letters are available at our CFC USA website at <http://www.couplesforchristusa.org/index.php/resources/reflections-of-the-heart>

**THEME/TOPIC OF THE MONTH:
Lent: It's the Most "ACTION-packed" time of the Year!**

**Lent to the Max:
ALMSGIVING and Building the Church of the Poor
(Part 3 of a 3-part series)**

In last month's teaching, we outlined how to live out a fruitful Lent through an intense and fervent prayer life followed by the practice of fasting/penance which gives power to ones' prayer life--- prayer that can move mountains and conquer victories as in the example of Jesus and his band of disciples, King David and his strong and mighty army, Moses and Aaron and the Israelites, etc..

ALMSGIVING is the last part in our Trilogy of living our Lent. Another name for "Almsgiving" is the practice of charity. Charity has two dimensions: the vertical pointing to our relationship with God and the horizontal, our relationship with our neighbor. St John reminds us: "How can we say that we love God who we do not see if we hate our neighbor who we do see!" (1John 4:20) Of course, this Biblical passage reminds us of the clear and objective reality that God can be found in many places but primarily in our neighbor. Jesus put it bluntly: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you have done unto me." (Matthew 25:40). At his first audience on March 16, 2013, Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) told journalists that he had chosen the name in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, and had done so because he was especially concerned for the well-being of the poor. He explained that, as it was becoming clear during the conclave voting that he would be elected the new bishop of Rome, the Brazilian Cardinal Cláudio Hummes had embraced him and whispered, "Don't forget the poor", which had made Bergoglio think of the saint. Bergoglio had previously expressed his admiration for St. Francis, explaining that "He brought to Christianity an idea of poverty

against the luxury, pride, vanity of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the time. He changed history."

Pope Benedict XVI constantly called to mind the importance of love, charity, and respect for our neighbor as well as almsgiving. Three of the writings of Pope Benedict specifically addressed the topic of charity--- another name for supernatural love.

First was the Pope's 1st encyclical that carries the title "God is love" (coincidentally, our CLP talk # 1 is about God's Love). The Holy Father wrote and published on the importance of love. Incidentally, this is the most purchased encyclical in the history of the Church. The Holy Father, as universal teacher to the world, highlighted the essence of who God is-- God is love. We were created due to the overflowing love of God; we are created to be loved; we are created to respond by giving love and loving others; finally we are called to die in love and live loving God for all eternity in Heaven where love is total and supreme!

Second, Pope Benedict XVI also promulgated an Apostolic Exhortation with the title "The Sacrament of Charity". This masterpiece offers us the means by which we can truly live out the Gospel of love and it is through receiving the love of Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in Holy Communion. By carrying out this most sublime action of Holy Communion, then by receiving the love of Jesus in Holy Communion (we actually receive the most Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Sacred Host), we are made capable of loving with the same love with which God loved us!

Finally, Pope Benedict XVI also stressed on the importance of ALMSGIVING--- the third practice that Jesus suggests in the Gospel for Ash Wednesday. The Holy Father reminds us of the poor widow who gave her minimal monetary offering to the temple as an icon or model for the whole world. The message! Jesus does not so much fix His attention on

the enormity of the economic contribution but on the purity of heart, purity of intention and the mere willingness to give. A famous preacher (Adrian Rogers) summarized on this point: “God chooses small people with small things, but with great hearts to work marvelous miracles through them.

With this ecclesial and Biblical introduction on charity related to almsgiving, as is our style, let us plunge into the depths of God’s love by offering five concrete suggestions on how to give alms, how to give until it hurts, how to live out the “Gospel of love!”

1. CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME. There is a powerful Spanish proverb: “Candil en la calle, oscuridad en la casa.” Translation: “A burning candle outside in the street, but darkness in the home!” The meaning? Someone can be the kindest and most charitable individual in town, with his friends and co-workers, with CFC brethren and fellow parishioners, but at home he is the opposite. In other words, he is ready to help everybody and at any time, except his own family.

Proposal for Lent: Try to be kind, loving, meek and soft-spoken starting with the members in your own family! Remember the proverb: “Charity begins at home!”

2. GIVE YOUR TIME TO YOUR LOVED ONES! Another non-material way to give alms is simply to give generously your time to your loved-ones, family members, CFC members under your care, or somebody who has a lonely and broken heart. The art of listening is a precious art, but few are experts at it! As parents to our children and CFC servant leaders to members under our care, we must always be ready to give our time, attention, and charity to those God has given to us to love, shepherd and care for, especially those who are lonely, abandoned, and broken-hearted. How often, in dealing in tense pastoral situ-

ations with the depressed and lonely, to simply lend a listening ear can pull the individual (your teen in the verge of deep depression) or CFC couple (in the process of divorce proceedings) out of the pit of despair so as to shine in their hearts the rays of God's hope!

Proposal for Lent: Parents and CFC Servant leaders, be faithful to our one on ones with our spouse, children, CFC members under your care. Let us stop being just “functional” parents to our children or “administrative” leaders to our CFC brethren (i.e. you missed 3 assemblies, 2 teachings and 4 and a half household meetings last year...), instead, be pastoral leaders to those God has given to us to love and nurture. Sometimes, if there is a major issue with our children or CFC members, we are usually the last to know and by the time we know it, from someone else, it is too late to do anything.

Dear CFC members, make time for your CFC Servant Leaders and do not make excuses and when one on ones are schedule, and be open to them as they have been anointed by God to be “Christ” to you.

Let us all put those one on ones (or two on twos) in our calendars NOW and push through with it. We will all be glad we did it ... and so will our God!

3. KIND WORDS! The enemy loves to sow discouragement — but we have a tool much more powerful — encouragement! How important a kind, loving, charitable, humble and uplifting word. Words can tear us down or they can build us up. In the words of St Bonaventure, “We should speak in three occasions: to praise God, accuse ourselves, and to edify (that is to lift up our neighbor)”. St. Francis de Sales stated: “One can attract more flies with a teaspoon of honey than a barrel of vinegar.” God himself was most encouraging with His own Son. And a

voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17).

Proposal for Lent: Speak uplifting words especially into the lives of those who desperately need to hear it: to our spouse who may feel unappreciated, to our children who may feel misunderstood, to our household members who may be having marital problems, to the CLP Team leader who may feel alone in the harvest field; to the disillusioned newlywed young couple; to the forgotten servants of God who labor in an obscure and difficult ministry; to the orphans and the widows; to all those who need to hear a word in due season! We have the power in our lips to rekindle a discouraged soul. One troubled teenager wrote: "Maybe one person in a thousand years dies of too much praise, but every minute, a kid dies inside from lack of it."

4. CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY. Read the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25:31-45. In this you will find the "Corporal Works of Mercy". Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick or prisoner--- all are the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Some months ago, during my quiet time with God, I pondered on how I can "visit the imprisoned" if I did not know anyone personally who was in jail. Prisoners are often "invisible" to us. But Pope Francis called our attention to the plight of prisoners on Holy Thursday last year, when he washed the feet of twelve young detainees at the Casa del Marmo detention center in Rome. "Washing your feet means I am at your service," he said to them. "Help one another. This is what Jesus teaches us." Pope Francis vividly demonstrated God's love for prisoners and challenges us to do likewise. I then became a Word Among Us Ministry for Prisoners Partner. The Word Among Us is a monthly Catholic publication that I have personally subscribed for many, many years now and have helped

me in my walk with God. Prisoners need our love and support. They ache to do simple things: visit their parents, shop for school supplies and new clothes, shoot hoops with their son, braid their daughter's hair, hug their child goodbye on the first day of school and welcome them home again. But they can't. Incarceration devastates families. Many prisoners have suffered broken relationships because of their bad choices and the distance created by imprisonment. Some wait years for reconciliation that never comes. And yet, these men and women have amazing faith. Some have served many, many years and still have joy and hope in the Lord! Lives have been healed and transformed by the love of God through prayer, Scripture, and reading *The Word Among Us*. What a blessing! You may wonder, "How is *The Word Among Us* used behind bars?" A lot of them start their day by reading it. Many use it as a Bible study. Many more share what they are learning with other prisoners and their families. Over 11,000 partners are touching the lives of 57,000 prisoners every day made possible by the love for prisoners and continued financial support of this ministry. Just one way of fulfilling Jesus' words, "I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:36).

Proposal for Lent: As with last month's Pastoral Formation Materials, continue to pray over the Corporal Works of Mercy and beg the Holy Spirit to discover which of these God is calling you to live out in this Lent!

"Speak O Lord for your servant is listening!"

You can visit *The Word Among Us* at www.wau.org

5. ALMSGIVING: MATERIAL GOODS! Pope Francis stated: "The times talk to us of so much poverty in the world and this is a scandal. Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry."

If you can give alms, monetarily to the church, the poor or some charitable institution (ANCOP), then give with generosity and trust in Divine Providence. The key to giving is the keen realization that the giving is really being done to Jesus Himself. Indeed Jesus is truly present in the poor, the sick, the hungry and thirsty, and the sick and incarcerated. “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me.” Giving to the poor is more than giving money to a cause, but more importantly placing trust in a loving, caring and a Providential God, who said: “Look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field...and, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be given to you beside...” (Sermon on the Mount Mt. 6:25-34). If we generously and with limitless trust give to God in the poor He will give and provide abundantly for all of our needs! TRUST! TRUST!! TRUST!!!

Proposal for Lent: Accomplish Operation Easter Blessings.

Let us all pray that each CFC couple, each Handmaid of the Lord, each Servant of the Lord and each Single for Christ adopt and sponsor (or pledge to adopt/sponsor) at least one child for the ANCOP Child Sponsorship Program (CSP) by the end of the Easter season culminating in the birthday of our Church – Pentecost Sunday (June 8, 2014)!

Let us all pray that each CFC-Y youth and KFC kid will share his/her allowance and savings so that each CFCY and KFC Chapter can adopt/sponsor at least one child each by the end of the Easter season culminating in the birthday of our Church – Pentecost Sunday (June 8, 2014)!

In addition, let us pray that each CFC, HOLD, SOLD, CFCY, KFC Chapter enthusiastically plan and implement at least one major activity to raise awareness and funds for the ANCOP Community Development Program (CDP) by the end of 2014.

God is giving us this opportunity to do something beautiful for Him. How

can we say “No”?

In addition, please have this as a theme of your assemblies, teachings and household meetings this month of April. Let us all create awareness and ensure that ALL our CFC brethren are given this wonderful opportunity to give back to God.

The key to the success of Operation Easter Blessings is instant obedience to God. Right after the assembly, teaching or household meeting, fill out that pledge form. Don't delay as by the time you leave the venue, the evil one will put doubts into your mind (Are you sure you can afford it?), the world will distract you (Think of your work deadline first) and the flesh will deceive you (What about the Benz you have been dreaming about?). It may hurt for some but God is asking- Do you TRUST me? I urge you brothers and sisters to TRUST GOD act on it NOW by clicking on or typing this website link: <http://www.ancopusa.org/sponsor> Another important Lenten proposal is to make sure we avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to sincerely repent of the times when we failed to show love to our God and to our neighbor.

In conclusion, to rejoice in the Risen Lord Jesus on Easter Sunday and during the Easter week (the Octave) and in the fifty days of the Easter Season, culminating in Pentecost Sunday, we must live fervently, generously, and with total trust this Lent. Therefore, let us pray with all our hearts, sacrifice to the point of “giving until it hurts” and loving with the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the poor, our own poor of ANCOP. God will shower you with a deluge of blessings in this life and for all eternity! May our Blessed Mother's “Yes” be our “Yes!”

SPECIAL THANKS TO FR. ED BROOM OVM

**SONG OF THE MONTH:
FEARLESS BY BIMBO YERRO (CFC)**

(Beautiful song composed by our very own CFC Bimbo Yerro. Suggest you listen to and meditate on the song before going through the teaching; see attachment for song lyrics) Click on the link below:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X1pP6mOEsg>

Let Your hope arise
And be the light into the eyes of the hopeless
Back In Your arms, in Your love unfailing

Faith and joy collide
And overwhelm what I desire
That I will want, nothing more.
For You are everything

Pre-Chorus:
For God is all enough And in Him I will remain

Chorus:
Lord You are fearless
You died to save my soul
A heart so selfless
My sins You conquered all
God in Your grace now
Oh I will do the same
To be as fearless
To stand and to proclaim

Bridge:
In your name, we trust. In the hope of rising again
Into love, your will be done

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PARAGRAPHS OF THE MONTH: CCC 2544-2547 VI. LOVE FOR THE POOR

2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: “Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you”; “you received without pay, give without pay.” It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.²³³ When “the poor have the good news preached to them,” it is the sign of Christ’s presence.

2444 “The Church’s love for the poor... is a part of her constant tradition.” This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor.²³⁵ Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to “be able to give to those in need.” It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.

2445 Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use: Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you.

2446 St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.” “The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity”: When we attend to the needs of those in

want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.

2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.²⁴³ Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God: He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

2448 “In its various forms—material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death—human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere.”

2449 Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of Deuteronomy: “For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your

brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land.”” Jesus makes these words his own: “The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.” In so doing he does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against “buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals... ,” but invites us to recognize his own presence in the poor who are his brethren: When her mother reproached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, St. Rose of Lima said to her: “When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus

SOURCE: CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SAINT-TO-BE OF THE MONTH: BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA



Feast day: September 5
Patron of World Youth Day
1991-1997

The remarkable woman who would be known as Mother Theresa began life named Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, she was the youngest child born to Nikola and Drane Bojaxhiu, Receiving her First Communion at the age of five, she was confirmed in November 1916. Her father died while she was only eight years old leaving her family in financial straits.

Gonxha's religious formation was assisted by the vibrant Jesuit parish of the Sacred Heart in which she was very involved as a youth.

Subsequently moved to pursue missionary work, Gonxha left her home in September 1928 at the age of 18 to join the Institute of the Blessed

Virgin Mary, known as the Sisters of Loreto, in Ireland. She received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Therese of Lisieux. In December of 1929, she departed for her first trip to India, arriving in Calcutta. After making her First Profession of Vows in May 1931, Sister Teresa was assigned to the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta and taught at St. Mary's School for girls.

Sister Teresa made her Final Profession of Vows, on May 24, 1937, becoming, as she said, the "spouse of Jesus" for "all eternity." From that time on she was called Mother Teresa.

She continued teaching at St. Mary's and in 1944 became the school's principal. Mother Teresa's twenty years in Loreto were filled with profound happiness. Noted for her charity, unselfishness and courage, her capacity for hard work and a natural talent for organization, she lived out her consecration to Jesus, in the midst of her companions, with fidelity and joy.

It was on September 10, 1946 during a train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat, Mother Teresa received her "inspiration, her call within a call." On that day, in a way she would never explain, Jesus' thirst for love and for souls took hold of her heart and the desire to satiate His thirst became the driving force of her life.

By means of interior locutions and visions, Jesus revealed to her the desire of His heart for "victims of love" who would "radiate His love on souls." "Come be My light," He begged her. "I cannot go alone."

Jesus revealed His pain at the neglect of the poor, His sorrow at their ignorance of Him and His longing for their love. He asked Mother Teresa to establish a religious community, Missionaries of Charity, dedicated to the service of the poorest of the poor.

Nearly two years of testing and discernment passed before Mother Teresa received permission to begin. On August 17, 1948, she dressed for the first time in a white, blue-bordered sari and passed through the gates of her beloved Loreto convent to enter the world of the poor.

After a short course with the Medical Mission Sisters in Patna, Mother Teresa returned to Calcutta and found temporary lodging with the Little Sisters of the Poor. On December 21, she went for the first time to the slums. She visited families, washed the sores of some children, cared for an old man lying sick on the road and nursed a woman dying of hunger and tuberculosis. She started each day with communion then went out, rosary in her hand, to find and serve Him amongst "the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for." After some months, she was joined, one by one, by her former students.

On October 7, 1950 the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. By the early 1960s, Mother Teresa began to send her Sisters to other parts of India. The Decree of Praise granted to the Congregation by Pope Paul VI in February 1965 encouraged her to open a house in Venezuela. It was soon followed by foundations in Rome and Tanzania and, eventually, on every continent. Starting in 1980 and continuing through the 1990s, Mother Teresa opened houses in almost all of the communist countries, including the former Soviet Union, Albania and Cuba.

In order to respond better to both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity Brothers in 1963, in 1976 the contemplative branch of the Sisters, in 1979 the Contemplative Brothers, and in 1984 the Missionaries of Charity Fathers.

Mother Theresa's inspiration was not limited to those with religious vo-

cations. She formed the Co-Workers of Mother Teresa and the Sick and Suffering Co-Workers, people of many faiths and nationalities with who she shared her spirit of prayer, simplicity, sacrifice and her apostolate of humble works of love.

This spirit later inspired the Lay Missionaries of Charity. In answer to the requests of many priests, in 1981 Mother Teresa also began the Corpus Christi Movement for Priests as a "little way of holiness" for those who desire to share in her charisma and spirit.

During the years of rapid growth the world began to turn its eyes towards Mother Teresa and the work she had started. Numerous awards, beginning with the Indian Padmashri Award in 1962 and notably the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, honored her work, while an increasingly interested media began to follow her activities. She received both prizes and attention 'for the glory of God and in the name of the poor.'

There was a heroic side of this great woman that was revealed only after her death. Hidden from all eyes, even from those closest to her, was her interior life marked by an experience of a deep, painful and abiding feeling of being separated from God, even rejected by Him, along with an ever increasing longing for His love. She called her inner experience, the darkness. The "painful night" of her soul, which began around the time she started her work for the poor and continued to the end of her life, led Mother Teresa to an ever more profound union with God. Through the darkness she mystically participated in the thirst of Jesus, in His painful and burning longing for love, and she shared in the interior desolation of the poor.

In spite of increasingly severe health problems towards the end of her life, Mother Teresa continued to govern her Society and respond to the needs of the poor and the Church. By 1997, Mother Teresa's Sisters numbered nearly 4,000 members and were established in 610 foundations in

123 countries of the world. In March 1997 she blessed her newly-elected successor as Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity and then made one more trip abroad. After meeting Pope John Paul II for the last time, she returned to Calcutta and spent her final weeks receiving visitors and instructing her Sisters.

On September 5, Mother Teresa's earthly life came to an end. She was given the honor of a state funeral by the Government of India and her body was buried in the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity. Her tomb quickly became a place of pilgrimage and prayer for people of all faiths, rich and poor alike.

Mother Teresa left a testament of unshakable faith, invincible hope and extraordinary charity. Her response to Jesus' plea, "Come be My light," made her a Missionary of Charity, a "mother to the poor," a symbol of compassion to the world, and a living witness to the thirsting love of God. As a testament to her most remarkable life, Pope John Paul II permitted the opening of her Cause of Canonization. On December 20, 2002 he approved the decrees of her heroic virtues and miracles

PRAYER OF THE MONTH:

Lord, open my eyes and my heart to those who are poor. Let me see you in those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, alone, hurt, and afraid. I know you can be hiding behind the unattractive disguise of my poor neighbor, and the many lonely people I encounter. Do not allow me to disgrace your loving gift to me by giving way to selfishness, coldness, unkindness or indifference. Make me do for others what I do for you. Show me how to help and serve them in your name. Like Blessed Teresa, help me see you in the least of my brethren and show love, more love and much more love. Amen.

MEDIA (TV/CD/BOOK/MOVIE) OF THE MONTH: PASSION OF THE CHRIST (BY MEL GIBSON)

(Note: Watch this movie ALONE preferably during Holy Week. Make this your intimate one-on-one with Jesus)

IPHONE/SMARTPHONE CATHOLIC APP OF THE MONTH: iBREVIARY (FREE APP)

The iBreviary is your portable breviary. You can use it to pray with the full texts of the Liturgy of the Hours in just five languages. Simply launch the application and all the texts of the day will appear before you. The texts of the Liturgy of the Hours are formatted just as they appear in the printed version. Thus the iPad version, thanks to the generous screen, gives one the feeling of holding a book with all the functionality and convenience of an Apple application.

The iBreviary also offers you the complete daily missal to follow the Mass or, if you're a priest, even to celebrate it. It is similar to the missalettes and worship aids found in your church.

The Missal of the iBreviary contains the Ordinary of the Mass, the Eucharistic Prayers, Masses for the Saints, daily Mass readings, Prefaces, Prayers of the Faithful, Solemn Blessings, rites for various celebrations and other liturgical texts.

The iBreviary also offers all the major Catholic prayers and more!

The iBreviary also offers the complete texts of the rites for the celebration of all the sacraments: the Anointing of the Sick, Viaticum, Marriage (including the readings), the funeral rites, Communion of the Sick, and many other rites useful for meditation, prayer and pastoral ministry.