

Hello there, my church community. I am Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. At least I was until 1937. You may know me now as Mother Teresa. I have traveled far to help those without food, shelter, or money. I'd like to share about how all this happened in my life. It was August 26, 1910 when I was born in the big city of Skopje, Macedonia, a city somewhere above Greece. I had a brother and sister by the name of Lazar (born 1907) and Aga (born 1904). I had two loving and religious parents. Their names were Nikolë and Drana. Nikola was a well-respected local businessman and my mother came from a wealthy family making my family wealthy, too. My childhood was very happy until 1919.

Things began to end up tragic. My father died when I was 9 years old, leaving my mother to open an embroidery and cloth business to support my family. Soon after that, the family was filled with sorrow. Later after my father's death, the family savings was gone. It was then harder to live on in my family. My mother felt very lonely day after day. I went to a small Catholic school called Lyceum, where I was found to be a good student.

At the age of 18, I had made my decision. I later responded to a vocation as a Catholic missionary nun. The vocation would then send me to India. I was never married nor did I have any children. Yet I was still happy.

Before I left for India, my greatest regret was giving up my happy life and leaving home to travel to a distant country. I then left in 1928 on my long journey to India. On my way, another Lady who responded to a vocation joined me. Her name was Betika Kajnc. Everyday on my way there, I would pray with a rosary of beads. Each bead represents a prayer for one day. It would take me almost an hour to pray with it. The first white bead is always started out with this prayer, a very famous one that you may know of:

*"Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."*

It was in 1929 when my companion and I reached India. As we walked around on the streets, there were people just living out on the sidewalks. We both started out by opening the Bible to them and beginning to read some stories from the Old Testament to them. I started to help them look for shelter. It was very hard but Betika and I managed to find some. Food began to be passed around. Everyone was happier then before we came. In 1937, I took my final vows as a Catholic missionary nun and then I chose the name Teresa name after Saint Theresa of Lisieux.

In 1948, I began working with the poorest people. I could feel that I was really teaching these people about God.

In 1979 was a wonderful day; I won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Peace was worth over 1 million dollars. And guess what? I donated it all to the poor. I

was willing to give up all my money for the people that I cared for. I knew it was the right thing to do.

In 1990, I asked to resign as head of the Missionaries, but was soon voted back in as Superior General.

It was 1996 when things began to go terribly wrong with my health. I fell and broke collarbone in April; I suffered a fever and failure of the left heart ventricle in August; I was treated for a chest infection and recurring heart problems in September; readmitted to hospital with chest pains and breathing problems Nov. 22. Then in 1997 I died.

I would like to be remembered as the one who helped the poor. The one who taught them about God. I think that I made a difference to people by showing the way to God for people and helped them in their life by giving them ALL that money from the Nobel Peace Prize. I may have not helped everyone but I helped. I say, "*If you judge people, you'll have no time to love them.*" And thank you for coming to my church service this Sunday.