

St. Teresa of Calcutta



One day, in one of the dirtiest and poorest streets of Calcutta in India, Sister Teresa came across a woman lying in the street, dying. This woman was so feeble that her body had been partly eaten away by rats and ants, even though she was still just alive. She'd been lying there for days but no one had taken any notice.

Sister Teresa had no trouble picking her up and carrying her to a nearby hospital. The people there said that the woman was too ill and too poor for them to care for her.

Sister Teresa didn't give up.

She took the old woman to another hospital. It was the same there. "We don't have any room for someone like that," they said. In the end, the old woman died.

Calcutta was full of people like that old woman. Sister Teresa knew she must help them. She got permission to use part of a building that had once been a Hindu temple but was now not used by anyone except a few thugs and beggars as a place for gambling and drinking. It would become her first "Home for the Dying."

But how did all this come about? At that time, Sister Teresa was a nun working as the head teacher of a school in Calcutta. Then, one day in 1946, she was on a train journey when she seemed to hear Jesus speaking to her. "I heard the call to give up everything and follow him into the slums, to serve him among the poorest of the poor... It was an order, a duty." She would later call that day her "Day of Decision."

It took some time for her to get permission to leave the convent where she lived, but in 1948, she was allowed to leave. She stopped wearing the dark clothes worn by the other nuns and started wearing a sari, like an Indian woman - except that her sari was white with a blue border and had a cross on the shoulder. She went to a place called Patna to learn to be a nurse.

Back in Calcutta, she began working in the slums: helping the poor, washing their babies, and cleaning their wounds. The poor people were amazed. "Who is this European lady who wears a sari and speaks our language? Why does she do this for us?"

Soon, Sister Teresa got other people to help her, and they started a school for the very poorest children in Calcutta. In time, these helpers became a new order of nuns, the Sisters of Charity, and Teresa became their "mother."

Since then, the sisters have taken in thousands of dying, homeless people. They now have more than seven hundred shelters like that first one in India alone, and they have others in many countries around the world.

Mother Teresa once told how she picked a feeble little old woman out of some rubbish. The woman said her son had put her there to die. Mother Teresa said, "We took her home to our place and we helped her. After a few hours she died in great peace."

Even though that woman died, Mother Teresa was pleased to have been able to help her. "We have homes for the sick and dying and it beautiful to see how these people, who have lived such difficult lives, die so peacefully." Mother Teresa called dying "going home" because she believed that people, when they die, go "home" to be with God.

Of course, many of the people that she helped got better. Some even became strong enough to work again. But what Mother Teresa wanted most was to let homeless, sick, and dying people know that there is someone who loves them and wants them.

DO IT ANYWAY

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.

FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

BE KIND ANYWAY.

If you are successful,
you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

SUCCEED ANYWAY.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

BE HONEST AND SINCERE ANYWAY.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

CREATE ANYWAY.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

BE HAPPY ANYWAY.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

DO GOOD ANYWAY.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

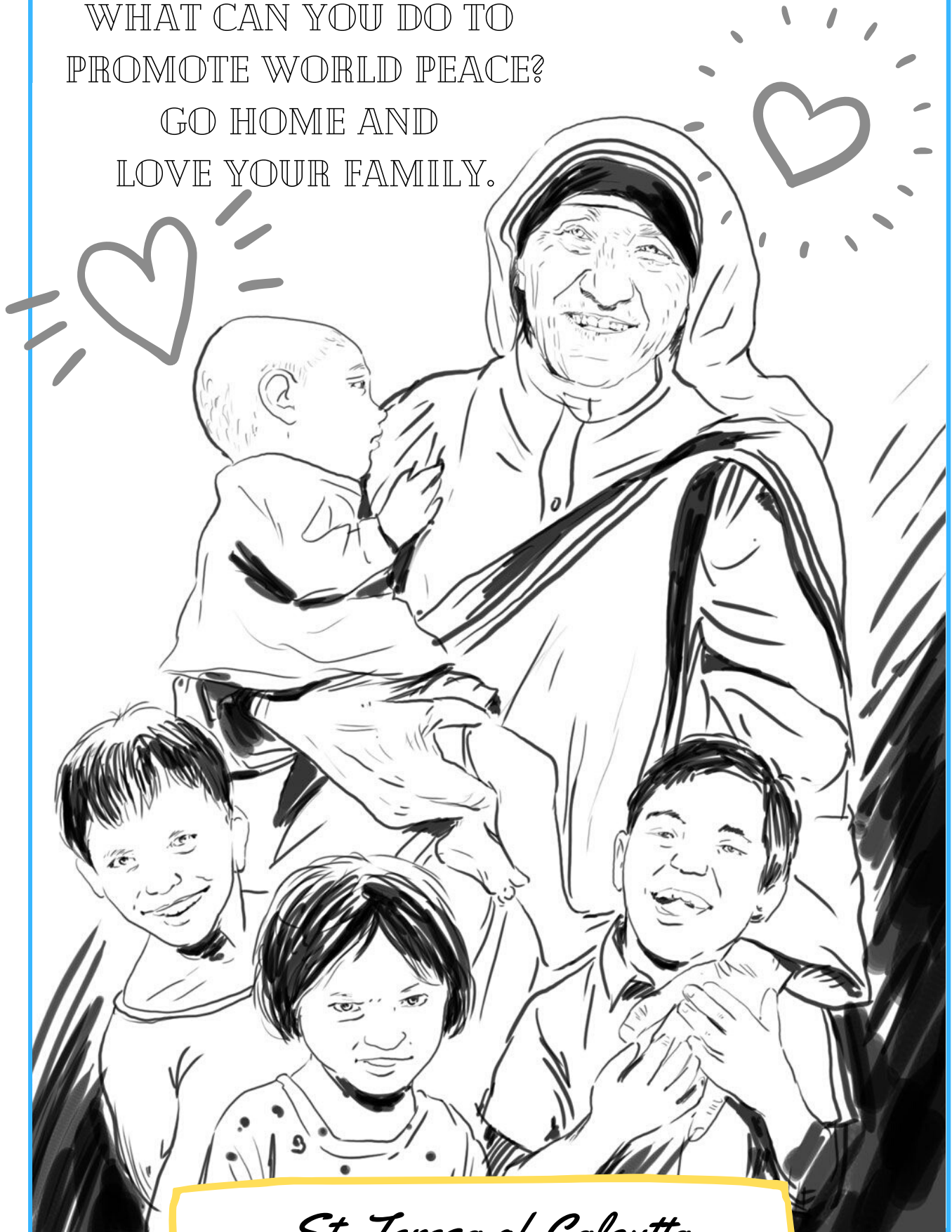
IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.

*This is written on the wall in Mother Teresa's home for children in Calcutta.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us!

Story taken from "The Loyola Treasury of Saints" by David Self.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO
PROMOTE WORLD PEACE?
GO HOME AND
LOVE YOUR FAMILY.



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