



Sculpture Credit: Brother Jerome Cox, F.S.C.

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta
1910 – 1997

**In Brief: CHARITY,
TO LOVE AS GOD LOVES**

“The Church...*must have a Heart, and a Heart BURNING WITH LOVE.* And I realized that *this love alone* was the true motive force which enabled the other members of the Church to act; if it ceased to function, the Apostles would forget to preach the Gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood.

LOVE, IN FACT,
IS THE VOCATION WHICH
INCLUDES ALL OTHERS;
IT’S A UNIVERSE OF ITS
OWN, COMPRISING ALL
TIME AND SPACE –
IT’S ETERNAL.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux
(CCC 826)

Sacred Scripture:

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:9-14

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

CHARITY

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“Charity is the *theological* virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*. By loving His own ‘to the end,’ He makes manifest the Father’s love which He receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in My love.’ And again: ‘This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you’ (CCC 1822, 1823). *Note: Theological means that this gift comes from God and leads us back to God. A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. Supernatural virtue means that the virtue of faith is above our nature..*

What is the supernatural virtue of charity?

“Christ died out of love for us. The Lord asks us to love as He does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ Himself” (CCC 1825). The supernatural gift of charity is infused in to the soul by God in Baptism. There will not be a need for faith and hope in Heaven but love never ends. (1*Corinthians* 13:8, 13)

- The supernatural virtue of charity makes up for what is lacking in our human ability to love and strengthens us to love as God loves, in reality allowing **Him** to love in and through us.
- God’s gift of charity or love inspires us to a life of self-giving, with Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross as our model.
- “To love is to will the good of another” (CCC 1766). Love is an act of the will, and it may not be a feeling. Love—that is His love in us—inclines our will to act and our emotions will indeed eventually follow.
- In receiving God’s love and our responding to His love, we reach the heights of prayer, that is, our union in relationship with Him.
- Charity binds everything in the Christian life together in perfect harmony and assures the unity of the Church. (*Colossians* 3:15)

Why do we need the supernatural virtue of charity?

- The supernatural gift of charity makes it possible for us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (*Mt* 22:37).
- Charity allows us to love our friends as well as “enemies”; to pray for those who persecute us, hating the sin but loving the sinner.
- Charity animates goodness in relationships, making us capable of acting as God’s children and of inheriting eternal life.
- The presence and action of the Holy Spirit guide us interiorly through the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, especially in serving those most in need. (See *Matthew* 25:31-46)
- When we need the gift of charity, the most important thing we can do is ask for it: “The Lord hears the cry of the poor” (*Psalms* 34:6).

“Her life is a testimony to the dignity and the privilege of humble service. She had chosen to be not just the least but to be the servant of the least. As a real mother to the poor, she bent down to those suffering various forms of poverty. Her greatness lies in her ability to give without counting the cost, to give ‘until it hurts’.”

**BEATIFICATION OF
MOTHER THERESA OF
CALCUTTA**

**HOMILY OF HIS
HOLINESS
JOHN PAUL II**
*World Mission Sunday
19 October 2003*



Charity

Blessed Mother Teresa



FAST FACTS

Also Known As:

Agnes
Saint of the Gutters

Feast Day:

September 5

“We all thirst for the love of others, that they will go out of their way to avoid harming us and to do good to us. This is the meaning of truest love, to give until it hurts.”

Her Life

- Agnes was born in Albania and raised with her brother and sister by her widowed mother.
- Taught through the living example of her mother, Agnes learned to feed the poor and care for the sick.
- By the time she was 12, Agnes knew she was ‘called’ to assist the poor and by age 15 she focused her interest in the missions of India.
- At age 17 she joined the Loreto Sisters who placed her as a teacher in a high school in Calcutta teaching geography and catechism. At that time she took the name Teresa in honor of St. Therese of Lisieux.
- God spoke to Mother Teresa, asking her to help the poorest of the poor.
- For two years she worked to found the Missionaries of Charity. In this order each nun vows to serve the poorest of the poor in addition to professing to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- In 1952, Mother Teresa opened Nirmal Hriday Home for Dying Destitutes which accepted only those whom hospitals refused.
- As the order grew, it extended outside India.
- Today, assistance for the poor and sick includes homes for the poor, schools, orphanages, leprosy clinics, homes for alcoholics and drug addicts, AIDS hospices, and care of physically and mentally handicapped people.
- Mother Teresa received 124 awards including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.
- Less than two years after her death, the process began to canonize Mother Teresa.
- On October 19, 2003, she was beatified.

How is Blessed Mother Teresa a model of Christian Charity?

- She took care of the poorest of the poor. She said, “Show love to others as you would show your love directly to Jesus Christ.”
- She knew that we all thirst for the love of others. “It is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can ever experience.”
- In her Home for Dying Destitutes, she provided gentle care and cleanliness in an atmosphere of dignity and love.
- When she was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1979, she convinced the committee to cancel the official banquet and the money was used to buy meals for 15,000 poor.
- Her greatest impact on society was to bring an awareness that love is worth nothing unless it is given for free.

Practices to foster the growth of the supernatural virtue of charity

- Memorize the *Act of Love* and pray this prayer each morning.
Act of Love
O my God, I love You above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because You are all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.
- Read a passage of Scripture on charity. Re-read the passage and pick a word or phrase that stood out for you.
Luke 10: 25-37 The two great commandments of love of God and love of neighbor.
John 13:34-35 Jesus gives a new commandment, to love one another as He has loved us.
John 15:9-12 We live in Jesus' love by keeping His commandments.
Romans 5:5-11 We have been filled with God's love by the Holy Spirit.
- Ask the Lord what act of charity He would like you to do. Examples: Help a sick neighbor, visit someone in a nursing home. (See the Catechism, paragraph 2447 on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy)
- How does the theological virtue of charity adapt us for our participation in God's nature? (See CCC 1812).
- Name some people from the Bible or saints who lived by charity. Example: Saint John the Apostle,
- Read a book about a saint and report to the class how this person lived by charity. Example: Saint Damien of Molokai.
- As a class, read about a saint and together discuss how this person lived by charity.
- What are the sins against charity? (See CCC 2094).
- Using the "Praying with Scripture" (*Lectio Divina*) prayer worksheet, take ten minutes to pray with a Scripture passage.
Matthew 8:1-4 Jesus cures Peter's mother-in-law
Mark 6:34-44 Jesus feeds five thousand people
Luke 10:25-37 Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan
John 19:23-30 At the crucifixion, Jesus gives John to Mary and Mary to John. John represents each of us. Jesus gives Mary to us and us to Mary as our spiritual Mother
- Think of someone who is charitable. What does this person say or do that indicates that he/she practices the virtue of charity? Begin by making a list of the words that describe charity from page one and other suggestions.
- How would someone know you are a charitable person?
- Discuss how the virtue of charity helps us to live a Christian life. The essence of the Christian life is about serving others, your view is always to will the "good" of another, and show our love for God by loving others. We truly show our love for God by the way we serve others. Examples: Visiting a lonely person, saying a prayer for someone in need, working in a soup kitchen.
- How does mortal sin and venial sin affect the virtue of charity? (See CCC 1855-1956, 1861, 1863, 1874-1875)

- What does the practice of charity heal in us? (See CCC 1394, 1472)
- What are the fruits of charity? (See CCC 1829)
- What would life be like without Christian charity (love)? (1 *John* 3:1-18)
- Why is Christian charity (love) indispensable? (1 *Corinthians* 13:1-13)
- How do we sin against God’s love? (See CCC 2094)
- How do we sin against the charity that is due to our neighbor? (See CCC 1878-1880, 1931-1932, 2447)
- In what way does the virtue of charity relate to the Beatitudes? (See CCC 1716-1717, 1719, 1728)
- In what way does the virtue of charity relate to the Golden Rule? (See *Matthew* 7:12 and *Luke* 6:31; CCC 1789, 1787, 1970)
- Which theological virtue is the greatest & why? (See CCC 1826-1827, 1 *Corinthians* 13:13)
- Memorize a Scripture verse that refers to Christian charity:
 - “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in My love” (*John* 15:9).
 - “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (*John* 15:12).
 - “So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But the greatest of these is charity” (1*Corinthians* 13:13).
 - “If I ... have not charity, I am nothing” “If I... have not charity, I gain nothing” (1*Corinthians* 13:1-4)
 - “Charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 *Corinthians* 13:4-7)

Jesus gave His Life for Us out of Perfect Charity

“There was no boundary to the cross; the arms outstretched even into infinity portrayed the universal efficacy of Redemption. There was no counting the cost: ‘Not My will but Thine be done.’ He even refused to touch a drink which might have dulled His senses, and thus deprive His will of complete self-devotion to men.”

“The essence of Christianity is love, yes! But not love as our world understands it; not loving those who love us, but loving even those who hate us. Love is not an organism, but in the will, not in affection, but in intention; not in satisfaction, but in preference to the choosing of God above everything.

“The perfection of all virtue is charity; love of God and love of our neighbor. Whether or not we, like Christ, shall deliver our soul into the Father’s hands on the last day, depends entirely upon the use we make of our freedom.”

The Seven Virtues, Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen,
Garden City Books, pages 92 and 93

Additional Resources on the supernatural virtue of charity

Pre-school through Third Grade

- *Little Book of Saints*, Book 3, Wallace, Sister Susan FSP, Pauline Books and Media (2 pages)
- *Glory Stories, Volume III: Blessed Teresa of Calcutta*, with workbook, Catholic World Mission, www.catholicworldmission.org or (203) 287-6314.
- *Mother Teresa: Seeing the Face of Jesus*, Video, Morning Light Media, 1998.
- *The Fifth Word*, Video, pasoaalto, www.pasoaalto.tv
- *Saints Tell Their Stories*, Mitchell, Patricia and Lo Cascio, Maria Cristina; The Word Among Us Press, www.wordamongus.org.

Fourth Grade through Eighth Grade

- *Saints for Young Readers for Every Day, Volume 2*, Wallace, Susan Helen, 1995.
- *Glory Stories, Volume III: Blessed Teresa of Calcutta*, with workbook, Catholic World Mission, www.catholicworldmission.org or (203) 287-6314.
- *Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Missionary of Charity*, Glavich, Mary Kathleen, SND, Pauline Books and Media (127 pages).
- *Mother Teresa*, Video. Windsor Home Entertainment, 1986.

Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady*, Langford, Father Joseph, MC, Our Sunday Visitor.
- *Lessons for Living: Blessed Mother Teresa*, Welborn, Amy, Our Sunday Visitor, (pamphlet).
- *Mother Teresa's Secret Fire*, Langford, Father Joseph, MC, Our Sunday Visitor, (220 pages).
- *Mother Teresa's Lessons of Love and Secrets of Sanctity*, Conroy, Susan, Our Sunday Visitor, (224 pages).
- *Mother Teresa – Come Be My Light*, Kolodiejchuk, Father Brian, M.C., The Catholic Company, (866) 522-8465.
- *Life with Mother Teresa*, Vazhakala, Father Sebastian, M.C., The Catholic Company.
- Mother Teresa Multimedia Presentation and Mother Teresa's Secret Fire Video, Our Sunday Visitor Website, www.osv.com / Blessed Mother Teresa.
- *Mother Teresa*, Video, Windsor Home Entertainment, 1986.
- *Mother Teresa: Woman of Compassion*, Video. AIM International Television
- *Work of Love*, Video, ikonographics, inc.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
 - Mary as the Model of Charity, paragraphs 967-968
 - The Theological Virtue of Charity, paragraphs 1813, 1822, 1826, 1841, 1844
 - Charity as the goal of our actions, paragraphs 1829
 - Charity as the perfection of the Christian life, paragraphs 1844, 1973
 - Saints as a model of charity, paragraphs 2156, 2165
 - The parish as a place of charity, paragraphs 2179
 - Charity towards neighbor, paragraphs 1789, 1796, 1931-1932, 2447, 2462
 - The grace of Christ as the source of charity, paragraphs 2011
 - Charity as love of God and neighbor, paragraphs 1822, 1840, 1844, 2055, 2086, 2093
 - Charity as loving according to Christ's love, paragraphs 1823, 1825
- *The Virtue Driven Life*, Groeschel, Father Benedict J, C.F.R.
- *Raise Happy Children...Teach Them Virtues!*, Budnik, Mary Ann, R.B. Media, Inc.
- *Character Building*, Isaacs, David.