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Mother Teresa of Calcutta: the perfect saint for the Year of Mercy

In view of the upcoming canonisation next Sunday, 4 September, of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a press conference was held in the Holy See Press Office this morning with interventions from several people linked to the future saint: Sister Mary Prema Pierick, M.C., Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity (the third Superior General of the Order, after the founder, Mother Teresa, and Sister Nirmala); Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C., Superior General of the Missionary Fathers of Charity, postulator of the cause for canonisation; Marcílio Haddad Andrino, miraculously cured by intercession of Blessed Mother Teresa, and his wife Fernanda Nascimento Rocha. The panel also included Stefano D'Agostini, director of the Vatican Television Centre.

"Mother Teresa is the perfect saint for the Year of Mercy", affirmed Fr. Kolodiejchuk, adding that she was "so aware of her need for mercy before God. She was very much at home with her own poverty. This Year of Mercy is first of all a reminder to all of us that before God we all stand in need of mercy; so in this we are all poor; we stand as a beggar in need of His love, of His forgiveness – of His mercy".

He went on to list the lessons that we can learn from the future saint. Her message, he said, is that "Calcutta is everywhere. Like Mother Teresa, we can call this reality of our interior poverty the 'Calcutta of the heart', and indeed, the 'Calcutta of my own heart'. Mother Teresa used to say, 'Calcutta is everywhere'".

Forgive and (truly) forget is another of her teachings, as "she was always ready to show mercy and forgiveness to others. We need lots of love to forgive and we need lots of humility to forget, because it is not complete forgiveness unless we forget also. And not forgetting, very often we say we have forgiven but we cannot forget. As long as we cannot forget, we really have not forgiven fully".

Mother Teresa advocated regular confession, as for her "it was not a matter of habit or routine, but of meeting the mercy and love of God each time anew".

She also taught God's love for sinners. "The devil hates God. And that hatred in action is destroying us. Making us commit sin, making us share in that evil, so that we too share in that hatred that cuts us off from God. But there is where the wonderful mercy of God comes. ... And this is what the devil hates in God, that tenderness and love of God for the sinner".

The “dark night” that the Blessed experienced explains her enormous capacity for mercy, since “the experience of darkness compelled her to depend continuously on the mercy of the Lord, and therefore to be always ready to show mercy to others”.

“Mother Teresa said ‘yes’ to the darkness, which was a terrible way to suffer for someone who loved God so deeply”, Fr. Kolodiejchuk remarked, recalling the words of the founder of the Missionaries of Charity: “I have come to love the darkness, for I believe now that it is a part, a very, very small part of Jesus’ darkness and pain on earth”. She felt deep joy that Jesus can no longer go through the agony, “but that He wants to go through it in me – more than ever I surrender myself to Him. Yes – more than ever I will be at His disposal”. “In this ‘yes’ of Mother Teresa”, explained Fr. Kolodiejchuk, “there is all her holiness and all of our Christian faith: all of what is asked of us to do and all of what we can do. Jesus does the rest”.

Finally, “Mother Teresa is a saint for everyone. Precisely because she was able to share the suffering of Jesus, she understood that she was loved in a special way by God. Mother Teresa is a saint for everyone, for the poor and the rich, and for our time, devastated by so much violence and aridity of heart, because she has shown that the evil/misery that we all carry within us can be forgiven and that, grasping the merciful and secure hand that Jesus extends to us, our darknesses can be overcome”, he concluded.

Tomorrow, 3 September, the Holy Father will celebrate in St. Peter’s Square a jubilee audience dedicated to the world of voluntary work and operators of mercy, and on Sunday at 10.30, again in St. Peter’s Square, he will preside at the Holy Mass for the canonisation of Mother Teresa.

On Monday, 5 September, the festivity of St. Teresa of Calcutta will be celebrated for the first time, with a Mass presided at by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin in St. Peter’s Square.

More information can be found at the official website: <http://motherteresa.org>

Furthermore, on the occasion of the canonisation of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the Secretariat for Communication will implement, in cooperation with MC360PHOTO, the project “I WAS THERE”, a very high resolution panoramic shot of St. Peter’s Square which will make it possible to zoom in from a complete view of the square full of the faithful to the face of each participant. It may be viewed, from the day after the ceremony, at www.motherteresasant.com.
