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Decree of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the inscription of the celebration of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, virgin, in the General Roman Calendar

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DECREE

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in the General Roman Calendar

“Whoever would be great among you must be your servant” *(Mk 10:43).* Radically living the Gospel and boldly proclaiming it, Saint Teresa of Calcutta is a witness to the dignity and honour of humble service. By choosing not only to be the least, but the servant of the least, she became a model of mercy and an authentic icon of the Good Samaritan. Indeed, for her, mercy was the “salt” that gave flavour to every one of her works, and the “light” that brightened the darkness of all those who didn’t even have tears left to shed over their poverty and suffering.

Jesus’ cry on the cross, “I thirst” (*Jn* 19,28), cut Saint Teresa to the quick. Thus, for her whole life she dedicated herself completely to satiate the thirst of Jesus Christ for love and souls, serving him amongst the poorest of the poor. Filled with the love of God, she radiated that same love in equal measure to others.

Canonized in 2016 by Pope Francis, the name of Teresa of Calcutta continues to shine out as a source of hope for many men and women who seek consolation amidst tribulations of body and spirit.

Therefore, Pope Francis, accepting the petitions and desires of Pastors, Religious men and women, as well as Associations of the Faithful, and considering the influence exercised by the spirituality of Saint Teresa in different parts of the world, has decreed that the name of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Virgin, shall be inscribed in the General Roman Calendar and her Optional Memorial shall be celebrated by all on 5 September every year.

This new Memorial is to be inserted in all Calendars and Liturgical Books for the celebration of Mass and the

Liturgy of the Hours, adopting the texts attached to the present decree, which must be translated, approved, and after confirmation by this Dicastery, published by the Episcopal Conferences.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 24 December 2024.

Arthur Card. Roche

Prefect

✠ Vittorio Francesco Viola, O.F.M.

Archbishop Secretary

Comment of His Eminence Cardinal Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

Saint Teresa of Calcutta in the General Roman Calendar

On 24 December 2024, the day on which Pope Francis opened the door in the Vatican Basilica, marking the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Hope, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a Decree on behalf of the Holy Father (Prot. N. 703/24), by means of which the celebration of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, virgin, was inscribed in the Calendar of the Roman Rite on 5 September as an optional memorial.

This insertion willed by the Holy Father in response to the requests of bishops, religious and associations of the faithful, and considering the influence of the spirituality of Saint Teresa of Calcutta throughout the world, wished to propose her an outstanding witness to hope for those who had been discarded in life.

Together with the Decree there are, in the Latin language, elements to be added to all liturgical Calendars and liturgical Books for the celebration of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as the Roman Martyrology.

It is now the responsibility of the Bishops' Conferences to translate, approve and, after confirmation by this Dicastery, publish these liturgical texts for this celebration, as provided for in the current norms (cf. Apostolic Letter in the form of the motu proprio *Magnum principium*).

In his homily at the Eucharistic Celebration, during which the Rite of Canonisation of Saint Teresa of Calcutta took place (4 September 2016), Pope Francis pointed to her as a generous conduit of divine mercy which, like «salt» which gives flavour to everything, and «light» which illumines the darkness, pervaded all that she undertook.

This Servant of the least of the least is, therefore, an authentic icon of the Good Samaritan. «Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries" as the Holy Father noted in his homily "remains for us today an eloquent witness to God's closeness to the poorest of the poor».

In the liturgical texts of this celebration, the Collect prayer opens for us the heart of her spirituality: the call to satisfy the thirst of Jesus Christ on the Cross by answering with love the needs of the most needy. For this reason, we beseech God the Father that, imitating her example, we may minister to Christ present in our

suffering brothers and sisters.

For the Lectionary, the first reading is a text from the prophet Isaiah concerning the fast that is pleasing to God (cf. *Is* 58:6-11), followed by Psalm 33: «I will bless the Lord at all times».

The Gospel, preceded by the Alleluia, highlights the revelation of the mysteries of the Kingdom to little ones (cf. *Mt* 11:25), and includes the beautiful text of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew which, after enumerating the works of mercy, contains the following words brought wonderfully to life in Mother Teresa: «Whatever you have done to the very least of my brothers and sisters you have done also to me» (*Mt* 25:40).

With regard to the Liturgy of the Hours and following the hagiographical note, is the second reading of the Office of Readings, a text taken from the letter that the saint wrote to Father Joseph Neuner in 1960, in which, opening her soul, she manifests the darkness of God's absence through which she lived for many years yet joyfully offered to God, so that, bearing faithfully this trial, many souls may be enlightened.

The liturgical texts conclude with the eulogy of the Roman Martyrology which now places her in first position of celebrations on 5 September.

May the insertion of this celebration in the General Roman Calendar help us to contemplate this woman, a beacon of hope, small in stature yet great in love, a witness to the dignity and privilege of humble service in the defence of all human life and of all those who have been abandoned, discarded and despised even in the hiddenness of the womb.

Arthur Card. Roche

Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship

and the Discipline of the Sacraments