

MOTHER TERESA

An Authorized Biography

By Kathryn Spink

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Her intention was simple: Do small things with great love. Mother Teresa (née Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, b. 1910 in Skopje then Kosova region, of Albanian parentage, d. 1997 Kolkata) offered "the experience of love and compassion to those in the image of Christ"—especially sick and abandoned children. To fulfill her calling, the young nun insisted on living among the "poorest of the poor," first in Kolkata in 1929. Criticized for giving fish to the poor instead of teaching them how to fish, Mother Teresa countered that she helps those without the strength to even lift the rod. Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in 1987, she said, "[L]et us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love. . . ." In her faith in the healing power of small acts, Mother Teresa was truly subversive. The impact is obvious. As of 2010, "5,029 sisters (both active and contemplative) [were] serving in 766 houses in 21 countries." Countless others tasted fish. —Lisa Thaler, author of *Look Up: The Life and Art of Sacha Kolin*, 24 January 2019