



### 1. The visits of Mother Teresa to Sophia University



Let us keep the joy of loving God in our hearts  
and share this joy with all we meet and so become  
an Instrument of Peace. God bless you  
M.Teresa mc 26-4-81.

This is a picture of Mother Teresa (and Fr. William Currie) at her Sophia lecture in 1981. The message below the picture is in her own handwriting. It says: "Let us keep the joy of loving God in our hearts. And share the joy with all we meet and so become an Instrument of Peace. God bless you. M.Teresa, mc 26-4-81

of Calcutta (now renamed Kolkata) in India, which have the reputation of having the world's worst living conditions. For almost half a century, she has devoted herself to activities to assist the very poor. She works with elderly people and children who have

been abandoned on the streets, with patients suffering from Hansen's disease, and with people who have contracted Aids. These works of love have become known

Each of the three times that Mother Teresa came to Japan, she was able to visit Sophia University and to deliver a talk there. The title of her talk in 1981, given on April 26th, was "What is Beautiful?" This talk has also been published under a slightly different title: "The Most Beautiful Thing in the World". Her words left a deep emotional impression on the roughly 1300 students, staff members, and faculty members who

heard her speak. In her talk in 1982: "What is Hunger?" and her talk in 1984: "Hunger and Life", she accurately described the spiritual hunger that can be found in prosperous Japan.

Mother Teresa threw herself into the slums



This is a picture of Mother Teresa (and Fr. Kunii) during her 1984 lecture in the Auditorium of Building 10.

all over the world, so that in 1979 Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. After her death, the Missionaries of Charity (literally, the Missionaries of the Love of God) continued her activities. These sisters and brothers now number some 4500, working in the slums of many cities throughout the world.

When Mother Teresa was first sent to India from Europe as a religious sister, she was assigned to teach geography at St. Mary's in Calcutta, a school for affluent children. She soon worked as a principal of this school. When riding a train once from Calcutta to Darjeeling in 1946, she received an invitation from God "to work for the welfare of the poorest of the poor". She received permission from Pope Pius XII in 1948 to work as an individually missioned sister outside of any institution of her congregation. She thus left her school and convent to work by herself. She recalls that she only had five rupees (about ¥200) in her possession at the time when she went out to live on her own.

Her first work was to gather children who had been abandoned on the streets and give them free instruction on the street. Many of the students she had taught at St. Mary's felt great sympathy with this work, so Mother Teresa gathered them together. They came to be supported by donations of money and other gifts from churches and local supporters. She founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950. The groups she founded



This picture shows the home for people waiting for death. This photograph was taken by Morihiro Oki.

have targeted their work at the most underprivileged persons in the world. Such work meant to become at the service of people who had been thrown out onto the city streets with nothing to eat, nothing to wear, possessing just plain nothing. The groups she founded were to serve the sick persons that no doctors wanted to treat and those who had no relatives. Perhaps the most impressive work these groups undertake can be found in their "Houses for Those Awaiting Death".

According to an account of Mother Teresa, this particular work started when she met a young woman on the streets whose face had been eaten away by rats and maggots. This woman had been abandoned by hospitals and ignored by passers-by. She was the most poor of all the poor people who were soon to die. So, the Missionaries of Charity started an institution to help such people with their final days before death. During her first visit to Sophia, Mother Teresa told the audience members this story:

One evening we found a woman who was close to death. Her body was actually infested

by worms. I removed all the worms from the body of the woman. I wiped all of her body until it was cleaned. It took me some time to clean her, to clean her body, to remove all the worms. When I put her on a bed, she took hold of my hand, and there was such a beautiful smile on her face. She said only one word: "Thank you" and she died.

What Mother Teresa received was the Love of God. As she said: "This is the greatness of the poorest of the poor." The poor gave Mother Teresa much more of the Love of God than the things Mother Teresa was able to give them. She continued: "Why? Do you all understand? It is because each one of these poor persons is created by the same love of God, to love and to be loved."

## **2. An idea taken from the talks of Mother Teresa: the hunger of the human heart – poverty in the midst of abundance**

Let me quote and summarize some of the impressive words that Mother Teresa shared with the audience members at Sophia.

The poor people are not only those who are hungry for bread of those who have to live on the streets. The people who hunger for love, the people who have been rejected by society, are much more poor—even when they are living in the midst of abundance. The hunger that is due to not having enough food is not so difficult to remove. It is much more difficult to remove the spiritual hunger, the thirst for love, the hunger of the heart. We pray; we deepen our faith; we come to love Christ. We offer this love without charge to the poorest of the poor. Love begins with those who are closest to you. Please put love into practice in your own family first. Show love to the people who are suffering, to those who are in trouble. Show this love until it hurts.

To young people who plan to get married: And if a mistake happens, do not destroy the child. Help each other to want that child, to accept the child, the unborn. Do not destroy. Get people to help you and you will be able to face God with clean hearts, to face each other with clean hearts. Become able to face your family with a clean heart, because one mistake should not be followed by another evil. To destroy the unborn child is an evil. You are all young; you have your futures. You have a new life before you. Make it a point that on the day of your marriage, on the day of your consecration (she probably means



Morihiro Oki also took this picture.

when a person joins a religious order), whatever way God calls you, that you give a virgin heart, a pure heart, a heart full of joy, a heart full of peace.

In her lectures, Mother Teresa communicated the message that, even in a country like Japan that is rich materially, there are many persons who suffer from spiritual hunger.



Mother Teresa (born 1919, died 1997)

She urged her listeners to become aware of the hunger of such persons living nearby. She urged them to reach out their helping hands to the spiritually hungry people around them. The number of people who cut off their own lives because they are lonely, because they do not mean anything to anybody—this number is increasing in Japan. The number of people who abort their own children is also increasing annually. On coming to Japan, Mother Teresa was able to identify the hunger of the heart in Japan. In the so-called area of ants in Koto City in Tokyo, her sisters started a “home for children” to care for unwed mothers

and abandoned children. Four sisters who had been sent from India started such activities. The

Missionaries of Charity now continue their work for unwed mothers and for the homeless in four locations in Japan: in Adachi City and Taito City in Tokyo, and in Aichi Prefecture and Oita Prefecture.

When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Prize for Peace, she remarked: I am not the sort of person to receive such a prize, but I accept it as a representative of the poorest of the poor people in the world. At the ceremony, she wore her usual sandals and the sari that the ordinary Indian women wear. She refused the customary reception, saying “I do not need a banquet.”