

Lessons from Saint Teresa of Calcutta on her Feast Day

By Colleen Mallette /catholicmom.com

On September 4, 2016, [Saint (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta] was canonized by Pope Francis. Most of us are familiar with this 20th-century holy woman because of her incredible prayer life and work with the poor in India that she was so fervently devoted to. Mother Teresa saw Jesus in all people, gave generously of her time to each person in front of her, trusted in God's providence, and committed her ministry to seeing that all people died with dignity.

Mother Teresa was small in stature but mighty in confidence, faith and charity. Her strong convictions made her bold in her lifestyle and leadership. She is a constant inspiration to me to treat others as if they were Jesus Himself. We are blessed to have many quotes from her as a wonderful example of how to live a Christian life.

Some of [Colleen Mallette's] favorite wisdom from Mother Teresa:

- ❖ God speaks in the silence of the heart, and we listen. And then we speak to God from the fullness of our heart, and God listens. And this listening and this speaking is what prayer is meant to be.
- ❖ Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts.
- ❖ You have to be holy where you are — wherever God has put you.
- ❖ Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.
- ❖ God does not demand that I be successful. God demands that I be faithful.
- ❖ Once we take our eyes away from ourselves, from our interests, from our own rights, privileges, ambitions — then they will become clear to see Jesus around us.
- ❖ I ask you one thing: do not tire of giving, but do not give your leftovers. Give until it hurts, until you feel the pain.

(all quotes taken from *Mother Teresa: Her Essential Wisdom*, edited by Carol Kelly-Gangi)

Thoughts on Mother Teresa's famous poem:

The fruit of silence is prayer,
The fruit of prayer is faith,
The fruit of faith is love,
The fruit of love is service, and
The fruit of service is peace.

(*Mother Teresa: Her Essential Wisdom*)

This saying is especially helpful to me for many reasons. First, if you look at the beautiful progression, it shows how God can lead a person to be holier and more like Christ starting with time spent with Him in conversation or prayer. Mother Teresa was such a wonderful

role model for service or charity, and this progression shows that by starting with prayer with God, our belief in Him increases, which leads to our loving Him better and an increase in our natural desire to want to thank Him by serving those around us.

Second, if you jump from the first step to the last, Mother Teresa shows that talking with God will lead to peace. It may not lead to joy or happiness, comfort or courage, but it will always lead to an inner peace. As my favorite Bible passage says,

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Third, it all starts with time spent in silence. If we are constantly on the go and busy, it is difficult to connect with God because our thoughts are so distracted and consumed. It takes effort to slow down and give God time in our day in prayer. We can pray while driving or showering or ironing, but preferably prayer should be still, devoted time with our eyes closed in focus — if possible, in a church, at Adoration, or in your home in a prayer corner. It doesn't have to be hours and hours: start with five minutes and build up to an hour a day if possible.

As Mother Teresa says, “this time is valuable and fruitful because it leads to such a peace within our souls that the rest of the day will be easier to deal with.”

**St. Teresa of Calcutta's
Reliquary can be found in
both St. Bridget &
St. Thomas the Apostle.**



Feast Day: September 5th