



Mother Teresa: A Biography (Greenwood Biographies)

Meg Greene

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In this new biography, students will follow Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu from her humble Albanian birth to worldwide celebrity as Mother Teresa. The nun who attended to the dying and diseased in Calcutta, India, and established her Missionaries of Charity around the world is revealed to have a singular determination from a young age. As a woman in the patriarchal Catholic system, she had to prove to the hierarchy, even the Vatican, that she was capable of handling each project she proposed. Her vision to live and work among the poorest of the poor as one of them led to the founding of a new order that tended to society's outcasts. The narrative chronicles the expansion and success of the order and the eventual attention that was showered on her efforts. This increasing attention led to scrutiny and criticism of ideology, methods of care, and financing. Why did she reject better medical equipment for her patients yet receive the latest treatment and best care when she herself was ailing? Why did she take money from and try to help Charles Keating, a major player in the savings and loan scandal of the 1980s? The accusation of hypocrisy, among others, are discussed as is her controversial beatification. Readers will be challenged to consider for themselves whether Mother Teresa deserves to be sainted.

Mother Teresa is characterized as being ordinary and her life as mundane. The biography suggests that she transcended her ordinariness with a singular belief that she was called to life's work. When this work brought fame, which she never sought, she used it to further her causes. In a global age, celebrity worship allowed her to work the system. She became an icon of service and selflessness, but her human flaws remained behind the saintliness.

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