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**M**other Teresa in pew next to Sister Nirmala Joshi (who succeeded her as the new superior general of the Missionaries of Charity). When Mother Teresa visited Atlanta and spoke at Sacred Heart Church, she refused a seat near the altar, but elected to sit with her Sisters.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Divine Coincidence — Mother Teresa's Atlanta Trip*

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**I**N THE EARLY SUMMER OF 1995 I began to plan my fourth trip to India. And then, out of the blue, I received a phone call from Gretchen Keiser, editor of *The Georgia Bulletin*, the Archdiocese's newspaper for greater Atlanta. She said Mother Teresa was coming to Georgia in a matter of days and asked if I could photograph the event. I just about fell on the floor; I was so excited. I had worked for Gretchen over the past ten years as a photographer, and she knew how much I wanted to one day photograph Mother Teresa.

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The night before her arrival in Atlanta I couldn't sleep. By 5:00 A.M. I was on my way to Hartsfield International Airport. At the last minute I had been given permission by her Order to photograph Mother Teresa at the airport. When the tiny corporate jet finally came into Atlanta's airspace, I ran out on the tarmac. The door opened, and there she was — dressed in the distinctive blue and white sari and wearing her frayed blue woolen sweater.

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As a photographer, I'm accustomed to not drawing attention to myself as I work, so I was shocked when I saw Mother Teresa approaching me after shaking hands with Archbishop Donoghue and a number of priests. She held my hands with surprising strength. What I saw was the face of the *mother* and a look of unconditional love.

We drove in a police procession through the people-lined streets of Atlanta to her AIDS home in Virginia Highlands. Dozens of volunteers were already waiting for her; she greeted each one in the garden behind the home.

Later, during a Mass at Sacred Heart Church in downtown Atlanta, I sat by her feet with my cameras piled around my neck while she spoke from a podium in the sanctuary. I hardly heard what she said. I was too mesmerized by her presence. I gazed at her face, at her feet, and at her hands. She was real, she was here, and I was going to see her again in Calcutta.