



"I must not attempt to control God's actions. I must not count the stages in the journey he would have me make. I must not desire a clear perception of my advance along the road. Nor know precisely where I am on the way to holiness. I ask him to make a saint of me, yet I must leave to him the choice of the means which lead to it."

— Mother Teresa

12

CHAPTER

Woman of the Century

* * * *

MOTHER TERESA'S STRONG DESIRE TO BECOME A NUN in the slums of Calcutta was eventually answered. However, there was a long waiting period. She had taken the route required. She joined the Loretto Order and spent her time in Ireland before being sent to India. But there was always an irresistible urge to go outside of the safe walls of the convent and to work directly with the poorest of the poor. These desires drove her, and as a result, she became one of the greatest influences on humanity in our time.

I roamed the streets of Calcutta for months. I walked on the railroad tracks where so many of the poor lived in cardboard boxes. But I could never hope to see these people through Mother Teresa's eyes.

* * * *
133

The British had left Calcutta behind and Mother Teresa rediscovered it. The city was graced by having a living saint in their midst. She went to the people in the slums and gave them her heart. "Come and see," she said. I could only see a glimpse of what she saw through those beautiful eyes, but I feel so fortunate to have been in her presence and to have looked into the soul of compassion.

I first met her two years before she died. It was near the end of the twentieth century. She was a woman who wore a cross near her heart. She never publicized her work, but she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

If there is a prize awarded for the Woman of the Century, I believe it would go to Mother Teresa. She embodied the message that we hope will grow more prevalent in the new century — the message of love.

* * * *