



Mother Teresa in deep contemplation moments before the Mass during which the noviciates would take their final vows and become Sisters.

CHAPTER 5

Missionaries of Charity

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THE LONGER I STAYED WITH MOTHER TERESA, the more I wanted to learn about her organization, how it was founded, and Mother Teresa the woman. It is well known that Mother Teresa doesn't like to talk about herself, but I found a beautiful authorized biography about her, written by an Indian Hindu, Navin Chawla, who received permission to write a book about her life and work. He gives an in-depth insight into Mother Teresa's boundless determination to help those most in need and how she went about organizing a multitude of centers in Calcutta and around the world.

They include homes for abandoned children; homes for the dying and destitute; medical dispensaries for lepers and tuberculosis patients; a colony for lepers run by Brothers of the Missionaries of Charity; and a prison for female inmates (which Mother Teresa was able to convince the Communist government of Calcutta to turn over to her control).

When the Missionaries of Charity's Constitution was approved by the Sacred Congregation in Rome, it included a fourth vow — wholehearted and free service to the poor. Mother Teresa's order began on October 7, 1950. Over the decades, close to 500 centers were established in more than 100 countries.

Shishu Bhawan is the name for the many children's homes throughout India. The Mission works closely with adoption agencies overseas and even handicapped children are usually placed. In the early days Mother Teresa herself would accompany the children overseas to meet their new families. Very often babies are brought to the Sisters on the verge of death, which brings the following quote from Mother Teresa to mind: "For me even if a child dies within minutes, that child must not be allowed to die alone."

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