

St. Teresa's childhood



By

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**(Translated from Macedonian to English and
edited by Risto Stefov)**

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St. Teresa's Childhood – The Nobel laureate from Skopje

September 4th, 2016 is the day that will remain indelible in the history of the Catholic Church, but of course also in our fatherland, Macedonia. On this day hundreds of thousands of people from around the world gathered at the magnificent square in front of the church dedicated to the Apostle Peter in ancient Rome, to attend a rare and memorable event, the proclamation of the world famous Gondzha Boiadzhiu from Skopje known as Saint Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa's canonization ceremony undoubtedly was a world event which received much attention especially from the world media, which offered live broadcasts on numerous television channels and other media outlets across Europe, North and South America and Australia. It was estimated that the event was watched live by about a half a billion viewers. The act of declaring Mother Teresa a saint will always be remembered and recorded in the annals of the Vatican and elsewhere. Normally the process of proclaiming Saints takes decades, sometimes even centuries. But this was not the case with Mother Teresa. In fact this proclamation was one of the shortest proclamations in the history of the Holy See. This alone speaks of the importance and significance of Mother Teresa who devoted her entire life to her work with unprecedented fervour.

But who is Mother Teresa, or now more fittingly St. Teresa, about whom, after her passing, India declared statewide mourning for the second time in its recent history? The first time was when Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, passed on. Who was this St. Teresa, a native of Skopje, for whom a memorial house was built and weeks-long commemorative events were devoted to her during her proclamation as a saint!? Mother Teresa perhaps was best described by Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church in Rome when, on September 4th 2016, he personally read the resolution declaring Mother Teresa a saint. This was done during the festive ceremony in front of hundreds of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square in Rome where, among other things, he said: "We celebrate Mother Teresa as a merciful saint who defended the lives of the unborn, the sick and the abandoned."

It is important to mention that our Gondzha Boiadzhiu, essentially, in the course of her life, was already informally regarded as a saint!

In other words, for nearly seven decades while she was alive, she dedicated herself to serving the sick, the poor and the disadvantaged. The moment she passed on she was considered as a very serious candidate for canonization. As a young journalist I was always interested in researching Gondzha Boiadzhiu's life story especially the period of her youth, from the day she was born and lived in her native Skopje for 18 years. My interest was revitalized back in 1980 when I was given the opportunity to meet with her first cousin, later known as a composer Lawrence Anthony, a peer and friend of Mother Teresa's. When Lawrence Anthony and Gondzha Boiadzhiu were young schoolchildren they spent a lot of time together, about which Lawrence had written in a diary in Cyrillic script in the Croatian language. On one occasion, during my visit to his apartment in Pristina where he lived after the war, Lawrence let me read a few pages from the diary, to which I will come back later. Lawrence, unfortunately, did not allow me to read everything in the diary. Even then he mentioned to me that his cousin Gondzha was considered a serious candidate for sainthood in the Vatican circles... while she was still alive!

During his early years Lawrence Anthony was an amateur photographer. When we met he showed me several photographs of his childhood which he spent in his native Skopje. Some of those photographs included young Agnes Gondzha Boiadzhiu, the future Nobel Prize winner and saint. She wore a school uniform in a semi profile pose with a beret on her head. I took the wonderful picture with me and when I had an opportunity to meet with her during her visit to her native Skopje in June 1980, I showed it to her. I then asked her: "Mother, do you recognize this young girl?" "Ne mogu da se cjetim," (I don't much remember) she replied. So I said: "Mother, that is you in a middle school uniform from when you were a student in Skopje." Mother Teresa looked at the photograph again, this time with greater interest. A small sign of almost undetectable sadness appeared on her face. She turned over the photograph and signed it. After that she passed it on to the three sisters of her order of Charity who had accompanied her to Skopje and told them to keep it as a souvenir.

The campaign to declare Mother Teresa a saint began immediately after her death. It was started by a Canadian priest named Brian

Kolodieichuk who had spent many years with her in Calcutta and had direct insight into her tireless work. He collected 76 files full of documents with over 35,000 pages of material from 113 people interviewed. All respondents were asked the same 263 questions in an effort to reveal Mother Teresa's contributions which would qualify her as a benevolent person. Mother Teresa or "St. Teresa" as she was recorded in her biography, or "St. Teresa of Calcutta" as she was officially called by the Vatican and by representatives of the media, was the same "Mother Teresa" who for the first time, on August 17, 1948, wore the white sari with blue lines recognized for its fine order "The Sisters of Charity", which on October 7, 1950 was recognized as a separate congregation with special approval from the Roman Catholic Church. The "Sisters of Charity" order was joined by many young women who followed Mother Teresa's example and dedicated their lives to helping the sick, the poor and the disadvantaged. By 1966 there were 517 "Sisters of Charity" missions in over one hundred countries. By 2012 its missions had reached 133 countries.

One time Mother Teresa was asked how she came up with the idea of forming the new "Catholic Sisters of Charity" congregation. She said: "On September 10, 1946, when I was traveling from Calcutta to Darjeeling in the Himalayas, I was inspired by a voice which said: 'Come, be my light, I can't do it alone...' I was beckoned to form a religious group 'the Sisters of Charity' and to dedicate them to serving the poorest among the poor people."

Mother Teresa died in Calcutta on September 5, 1997 at age 87. Just five years later, in 2002, the Vatican recognized the first of the two miracles necessary for declaring her a saint. It was discovered that an Indian woman named Monica Besra was cured of abdominal cancer after praying to Mother Teresa. One year later, on October 19, 2003, Mother Teresa was beatified and declared blessed. Then, on December 17, 2015, the Vatican officially confirmed that Pope Francis "had discovered the second miracle" necessary for her canonization. It was discovered that Mother Teresa had cured a Brazilian man suffering from a brain tumour.

After she left Skopje in 1928, Mother Teresa visited Macedonia, her place of birth, three times. All three times the city on the Vardar

(Skopje) welcomed her and her “Sisters of Charity” with open arms. A Memorial House was built in her honour in Skopje adjacent to the place where the Catholic Church “Heart of Jesus” existed, destroyed by the earthquake in 1963. A large bronze statue of St. Teresa was erected in front of her memorial house. There was also a large monument erected in the Skopje City Square in honour of our fair Mother Teresa, of whom everyone is proud.

The year 1979 was declared “Year of the Child” worldwide by the United Nations. The same year Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize by the Nobel Committee in Oslo for her missionary work, for her great contribution to strengthening world peace and for her generous help to millions of poor and rejected people! A brief announcement was made of this and carried by all the news agencies around the world.

Who is this woman whose name gave so much hope to the poor in the Calcutta suburbs in the last 70 years? Who is this woman who became the mother of thousands of abandoned girls and boys in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Jordan, Harlem New York, Yemen and many other countries, where she gave comfort to the sick and to the forsaken? Numerous books have been written in several languages about her life and contributions in India and in all the continents where she worked, about her deprivations and about the difficulties she encountered in her daily activities.

One day I decided to research Mother Teresa’s life story and write an article about the childhood years of our Nobel Prize winner. When I decided to do this, there were many people in Skopje who personally knew Mother Teresa, especially her relatives, classmates, friends, the church choir from the “Heart of Jesus” Catholic Church and others, with whom I had the opportunity to discuss our Nobel Prize winner from Skopje. After I completed the well-illustrated article I sent it by regular mail to her address in Calcutta. Then, during her visit to Skopje in June 1980, I asked her about it. I said: “Mother, I wrote an article about you and sent it to your address in Calcutta but you did not answer me.” She looked at me and said: “Yes, I remember, but you best know why I did not respond...!”

I already knew that and was again reminded that Mother Teresa does not want attention for herself but only for those who are sick, poor and disadvantaged.

On the eve of the Balkan Wars

Mother Teresa was born and grew up in Skopje during major turmoil and tumultuous events that changed at the speed of a motion picture, leaving behind lasting and indelible traces of historical life-altering events. Mother Teresa was born on August 27, 1910, as Agnes Gondzha Boiadzhiu, right before the start of the Balkan Wars. She lived in her youth at a time when the world had befallen into one of the greatest disasters in human history - World War I. Characteristic in that period (1910) in Skopje was the end of the Young Turk revolution, a growing awakening of the national consciousness in Macedonia, the working class organizing, and the Skopje socialists organizing and publishing their newspaper the "Socialist Dawn". The Balkan Socialist Conference took place in January 1910. It was held in Belgrade, where representatives from the Skopje Socialist group openly and clearly stated their desire for the Macedonian people's national and social freedom and for a free and independent Macedonia. Skopje at that time had about 20,000 inhabitants, which for that time was not a small number. Most of the city extended on the left side of the Vardar River where trade, craft development and manufacturing was booming. The city was starting to grow into a modern settlement, changing its face from a secluded, small Turkish town into a modern city. Back then people, for the first time, began to travel on the tram, albeit on only one line that extended from the former Iron Bridge to the end of Isla maalo, today's Idadia. The tram was open on the sides on which the ladies and gentlemen of Skopje rode all dressed up in suits in the latest European fashion, showing off their status in society. The first car appeared on the streets of Skopje just before the start of the Balkan Wars. Its owner was a great Turkish gentleman. "What is this noisy marvel?" people wondered astonished that it was self-propelled with neither a horse nor oxen pulling it.

Turkish Sultan Mehmed Reshad II's arrival in Skopje, in mid-1911, was a special event for the people of Skopje. All of Skopje was decorated for this special event. Many houses were knocked down to

widen the streets in honour of the Sultan so that his chariot could travel easily. This is how the “main road”, today called “Macedonia” was created. Unfortunately the road was very dusty, because there was not enough time to cover it with cobblestones (asphalt was unheard of in Skopje in those days) and to avoid the dust falling on their host, the people of Skopje covered the entire road with beautiful carpets. The Sultan’s chariot, his servants and his soldiers who accompanied him were privileged to walk on carpet. A brass ensemble, youth group played various songs to welcome Sultan Reshad to Skopje. One of the patrons of this ensemble was Nikola Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa’s father.

Originally from Prizren

On August 27, 1910, a baby girl was born to lucky and happy Nikola (Koloi) and Dronda Boiadzhiu. She was a tiny baby with clear eyes and a ruddy and cheerful face. They named her Gondzha which in Albanian means “bud”. The family name Boiadzhiu comes from Gondzha’s great-great-grandfather who was originally from Prizren and who worked as a painter (boiazhia). He got his surname “Boiadzhiu” from his craft. In about the first half of the XIX century the Boiadzhiu family moved from Prizren to Skopje. They bought a modest house in the “Vlach sokak” in Skopje. Then, after that part of Macedonia was occupied by Serbia, the street was renamed to “Pop Kochina”. Today it is called “Macedonia” located in the Skopje city centre near the Stone Bridge. Gondzha Boiadzhiu’s house was in no way different from the other houses in Skopje. It was a typical small Turkish single storey house built with mud bricks, interlocking wooden beams and covered with semi-circular ceramic tiles. Entry into the house was gained through a hallway and a couple of wooden stairs leading to three rooms; a living room which also served as kitchen and a reception room and two bedrooms. Located in the middle of the living room was a three-legged charcoal burning stove, which served as a furnace and a cooking stove for cooking food. This modest house had a small courtyard surrounded by a wall which separated the house from the neighbouring houses. There was a summer kitchen in the courtyard where Dronda prepared food for her family. Gondzha Boiadzhiu was born and raised in that small three room house.

The Girl from the Vlach neighbourhood

Gondzha then was only an Albanian girl to everyone in her class. She sang in the choir together with her sister Agusha and worked for charity. At age 12 she showed a strong desire to help the poor in India. The Boiadzhiu family was a modest, diligent and earnest family well-appreciated and respected in the neighbourhood. By ethnicity the Boiadzhius were Albanians and Catholic by faith. They got along very well with their immediate Macedonian neighbours that included the Pandov, Chuchuk-Petrov and Trashnarov families. Nikola (Kolio), Gondzha's father, was an outgoing person, a man with a jovial character. Sometimes he worked as an assistant to the then widely known doctor, Dr. Shushkalov (Shashkarovich). Later, when Nikola, with his hard work, managed to build some wealth, he paired up with an Italian business partner named Morten, who was a railway entrepreneur, and opened a grocery store in the Taftakalamaa neighbourhood, near Kale, opposite the St. Demetrius Church.

Three children in school

Gondzha's mother Dronda (which in Albanian means Rose) was a modest housewife who, despite doing her own daily tasks, devoted most of her spare time to bringing up her three children. Educating and rearing their children were Nikola and Dronda's main preoccupation. At the time when one conqueror and occupier was exchanged for another in this part of the world, it was extremely rare for an Albanian child to attend school. Gondzha, her sister Agusha (which in Albanian means spoiled child) and brother Lazar, however, were attending school and were solid students. Gondzha grew up socializing with the Vlach and Catholic children who gathered in the "Heart of Jesus" church (which, as mentioned earlier, was destroyed by the 1963 earthquake). In her seventh year Gondzha began attending classes at the Catholic elementary school with classes offered in the Albanian and Serbo-Croatian languages. She was an attentive student and devoted equal attention to all her subjects. But as a child, the future Mother Teresa liked geography, history and music the best. She was well-liked by her friends and neighbours. Things that she heard and learned in school she immediately passed on to all the children in the neighbourhood who

could not go to school. After finishing grade four in the elementary school, Gondzha was enrolled in a Serbian high school where she was taught subjects in the Serbo-Croatian language, because the Albanian language during that time had been banned. This was at the end of the First World War when the Kingdom of Serbians, Croatia and Slovenians was formed. Gondzha was the only child of Albanian nationality in the class. At that time it was not easy to enroll an Albanian child in school because, sadly, similar to the other nationalities which lived in Skopje (Macedonians, Jews, Turks, Armenians), they did not have the freedom or the opportunity for independent development. Her brother Lazar, born in 1908 in Skopje and her older sister Agusha (Age), helped Gondzha with her school work.

She was gifted in Music

All family members in the Boiadzhiu family were gifted in music. There were always songs heard in their home. They often gathered in the evening with relatives and friends, especially on holidays, and sang together. Gondzha and her sister Age sang in the Catholic youth choir and were among the best singers in the group. Gondzha had excellent hearing and a full and soft voice. When the youth choir sang, Gondzha's beautiful soprano voice stood out among the others. I was told this by Lawrence Anthony, who, as I mentioned earlier, was one of the greatest contemporary composers of Albanian nationality in the former federation and a close relative of Mother Teresa. He told me about Gondzha's singing ability during a meeting I had with him while collecting material on our Nobel laureate's youth. On May 25, 1928, Gondzha and her sister Age, during a charity event at the Academy of Skopje, performed the first composition written by Lawrence Anthony (then still a high school student), entitled: "On the shore of the lake" and written in the lyrics of the Albanian poet Hilia Moisia. The choir, in which Gondzha participated, was doing charity concerts at least once a month. The concerts in those days were held in a large building with a stage (former home of the Army, destroyed in the 1963 earthquake). In addition to the choir, the program also included a Mandolin Orchestra, a brass ensemble and a drama club. A concert intended for the poor was held on April 4, 1926 in the same building, during which Gondzha, Ana Lazarevich, Victoria Iaki, Sebastian Lekich

and Lorenz Antni, sang the songs “This Hour” and “My dear homeland” composed by German authors. Lawrence Anthony, fortunately, still had a copy of the program from the 1926 Albanian Catholic Youth Choir performance from the formal academy charity event during which Gondzha sang the church song “Alois allow me to love you”. The Tamburashki Orchestra opened the concert with the composition “The Power of providence”. The drama section performed the show “The young knight” in five parts, ending the concert with a performance from the choir.

Ties to India

As a high school student Gondzha loved nature. Once a week she went up the Skopje mountains with her sister, cousin Lawrence Anthony and her classmates to visit and enjoy the ample and idyllic landscapes, the lush forests and the monasteries. They went on foot with a day’s food supply and of course their obligatory musical instrument – an accordion or a mandolin, which Gondzha also played. Gondzha loved to picnic at the St. Panteleimon monastery located in the village Nerezi. She also loved the monastery Letnitsa at Skopska Tsrna Gora. They played their instruments and sang during every trip. Even in her early youth Gondzha Boiadzhiu was fully engaged in humanitarian events collecting clothing and other items in an attempt to assist the poor in distant India. Gondzha had learned about the misery and the impoverished people in the outskirts of major Indian cities and the everyday problems of millions of hungry and sick, from the letters she read from the Jesuit missionaries Pavel Masarich and Anto Bizjak, and later from the letters sent back by the nuns who had left Skopje for India. Even then, during her 12th year (as she herself had said on one occasion), she felt she was born with the desire to go and help the poor in India. Even then her house in Skopje was a shelter for the poor and rejected people. She gave one of the three rooms in her house to an old abandoned woman. “I want to become a missionary,” she said during one occasion at the time when several missionaries had left Skopje for India. They had told her stories about life in the institution “Loreto” in Calcutta. Initially, between age 12 and 13, she did not want to be a nun. The Boiadzhiu’s were a very happy family. But, on her 18th birthday she decided to leave her homeland

and become a nun and has never regretted or even doubted her decision since then.

Her father's death – a great loss for the family

A crucial moment in Gondzha Boiadzhiu's young life was the death of her beloved father Nikola who died after the Balkan Wars. The loss of a family bread earner meant the beginning of a hard life for the rest of the family. Nikola Boiadzhiu was the only one working and thus provided the means to the family's existence. After Nikola's death the family fell into hard times subsisting on Age's meager earnings and on the Lazar's occasional wage. The misery that befell her own family prompted Gondzha to work harder and definitely established herself for the missionary work she was going to undertake away from home in a few years. The times were then hard for everyone, as the old people from Skopje remembered. There were still fresh memories in their minds of the horrors of the First World War and the years they experienced great hunger and tuberculosis. Gondzha too was seriously ill at one point, but managed to be cured with the aid of old folk remedies. In her youth, Gondzha was a girl of medium height, slender and very energetic. Her brother Lazar, on the other hand, developed into a tall and stocky man especially fitted for sports. At one time, as Andrei Lekovski, a friend from his childhood had told me, Lazar played soccer for the Serbian club "Citizen", and competed in the first division.

Three trips to her native Skopje, 1971, 1977 and 1980 - Departure from Skopje

In September 1928, Gondzha Boiadzhiu left her native Skopje. Gondzha, accompanied by Nasta (Anastasia) Mihili (an Albanian Catholic) and by a Croatian woman from Skopje, traveled from Skopje to Zagreb, where they spent three months. From there they went to Loreto Abbey in Dublin (Ireland). This is where our Gondzha became a nun and received the name Sister Maria Teresa.

In 1934 Gondzha's mother and sister left Skopje and went to Albania to join Lazar, who several years earlier had received a scholarship from the Albanian government and had entered the

Military Academy in Tirana. For many years her sister Age lived in Shkodra working as a seamstress. After World War II she moved to Tirana, where she worked as a radio host for RadioTirana and sang in the radio station choir. Gondzha's mother Drona and her sister Age died in Tirana in 1974 within a short period of each other.

When I interviewed Gondzha's close friend and relative, composer Lawrence Anthony, he vividly remembered the days he spent with Gondzha before her departure. "Every Thursday at noon we listened to the music played by the military brass band at the Skopje square. It was also a Thursday when we said goodbye to our friend Gondzha. Our mutual friends Kasparov (ich) and Markov (ich) could not understand what was happening and tried to make the night last longer. There was no reaction in Gondzha that indicated that her last hour before departure was approaching. We sang and made jokes the same as always. Gondzha sang too as always. She even sang the song "Oi Sokole" and a Russian romance song, solo. During her departure Kasparov (ich) gave her a pen and Markov (ich) promised her a song by Mile Jakshich. We stood at the train station for almost half an hour and finally we said our goodbyes. Gondzha gave me a photograph and laughed. 'Here,' she said, 'this will be your last memento of Gondzha'. Half a century has passed since that September 25th day when Gondzha got on a train headed for Zagreb and forever left her birthplace. Our separation at the station was a sad affair, I remember it well!" said Lawrence Anthony and continued. "Contrary to her promise that she was not going to cry, Gondzha could not hide her tears and sadness during her departure. She kept waving her hand from the car window until the train disappeared into the distance. To honour Gondzha's departure the youth choir in which Gondzha sang, did a farewell concert for her. One of the songs performed at the concert was specially written and dedicated to Gondzha," said Lawrence Anthony during my interview with him back in 1980.

Seventy years of self-denial

In 1928 Gondzha left her place of birth forever and joined the world of the poor, sick and abandoned. She devoted her entire life to fighting disease, poverty and hunger, very much aware of the importance of her mission. She was tireless and knew of no fatigue.

The statisticians have calculated that Mother Teresa was a foster parent to more than one million sick and neglected people in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia, Mexico, Yemen, Jordan, Rome, Harlem New York, etc. She always embraced the abandoned, especially the children, like they were her own. “We have never refused a child. We always have one extra bed,” said Mother Teresa.

Again in Skopje

Mother Teresa visited her native Skopje in 1971, for the first time since her departure. When asked which day in her life was the most difficult day, she briefly said: “There was no such day!” When asked about the most difficult disease she had encountered she said: “The most difficult illness in the world we live in is hatred between people and lack of love...” Her main mission in life was to help the helpless, a difficult selfless task, which gained her worldwide recognition as a Nobel Prize winner and more recently as the holy Mother Teresa. These awards and recognitions for her noble work came from all corners of the planet. On July 6, 1971, Pope Paul VI awarded Mother Teresa the Peace Prize “Giovanni XXIII”. In September of the same year she received the award “Good Samaritan”, and in October she received the international award “Kennedy” and an honorary Doctorate from the Catholic University of Washington. On November 15, 1972 she was presented with the “Nehru ova” Peace Prize, the greatest recognition given by India, of which she became a citizen in 1948. In 1973 she received the “St. Louis of Mariak” award in Los Angeles. A year later she was declared a “Universal Mother”.

The decision of the Nobel Committee to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Mother Teresa in 1979 was received with much gratitude. This recognition of peace this time had reached the right hands. When Mother Teresa received the award in Oslo, she announced that the entire amount of 192,000 USD would be used to expand the city of peace in Calcutta where more than 47,000 lepers lived.

Mother Teresa visited her native Skopje for the second time in 1977. At that time she promised the people she would visit Skopje again, but the next time it would be a longer stay. In 1980 the people of Skopje were again proud and excited to hear that their Gondzha

Boiadzhiu, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1979, was coming back to visit them. The president of the City Assembly in Skopje sent her many congratulations and a warm welcome, giving her recognition for her long struggle against poverty, hunger and disease.

“...Warm and cordial congratulations from all of us here in Skopje on the occasion of you receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, about which we are all sincerely rejoicing...” wrote Metodi Antov President of the Skopje City Assembly.

Mother Teresa’s last visit to her native Skopje took place in June 1980. As a sign of respect the city fathers proclaimed Mother Teresa an “Honoured citizen of Skopje” because she was born there it was not appropriate to declare her an “Honorary citizen of Skopje”.

Since the establishment of the Nobel Prize to 2015 there were 822 prizes awarded to men, 49 prizes to women and 26 were awarded to organizations. The first woman to receive the Nobel Prize was Marie Sklodovska Curie, who was also a unique woman to have twice being recognized, once in 1903 and then in 1911. Her daughter Irena Jolie-Curie also received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1933. She too was a unique case in the history of this high recognition awarded all over the world.

Of the 49 Nobel Prizes awarded to women, 16 were for peace, 14 for literature, 12 for medicine, 4 for chemistry, 2 for physics and 1 for economics. A total of five prizes were awarded to women in 2005. This was the highest number of Prizes ever awarded to women in one year.

The Skopje born Gondzha Boiadzhiu followed a fascinating road from a Nobel Prize winner to a saint. It was an epic journey. Her oath to God took place on March 24, 1931 when, according to some of her biographers, she took the name Teresa following the example of Teresa de Lisieux, protector of the missionaries. Mother Teresa gave her solemn oath before God on May 14, 1937 as a teacher in the Loreto convent in Entally, Calcutta.

When the Vatican recognized the “Sisters of Charity” order in October 7, 1950, Mother Teresa’s own words were used to describe

the congregation's mission: "To take care of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the disabled, the lepers, the blind, and the people who feel unwanted, rejected, and uncared for by society..." And as I said before, it was estimated that the number of people cared for by Mother Teresa and her sisters of charity was well over a million worldwide.

It took volumes and volumes of paper to describe Mother Teresa's effort in the course of her almost seven decades of hard work. It is worth mentioning at this point that in 1952 Mother Teresa converted an abandoned Hindu temple into a "home for the mortals" and named it "Pure Heart" or "Nirmal Hriday" in the Hindu language. Here people on their deathbed received medical assistance, which, according to Mother Teresa's own words "those people who lived like animals out there, died here like angels - loved and accepted..."

Mother Teresa was a very frail person but immensely strong in spirit. In spite of her frailness she managed to achieve a lot more than many of the humanitarians. In 1983 she had a heart attack, and a second one in 1989 when she was outfitted with a pacemaker. Her heart problems came back again during a visit to Mexico in 1991. Then, in 1996, she had to retire from her position "firstborn" in her "Sisters of Charity" congregation because of ill health.

The following year, on August 27, 1997, her heart stopped beating altogether. One of the most famous women of the 20th century who started out as a little girl named Gondzha Boiadzhiu from Skopje, became the famous Mother Teresa of Calcutta who Pope Frances often addressed as St. Teresa, eventually became St. Teresa.

About the author

Martin Trenevski MA - A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

- Born in Skopje,

- Graduated from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje,

- Master of the Institute for Sociological and Political-Legal Studies, in which he obtained the title Master in Political Science,
- He was Member of the Macedonian Expert Government (1991-1992) and Minister of Information,
- He was Member of the Macedonian Government (1998-2001) and Minister for Immigration,
- Founder of the Macedonian-Japanese Society of Friendship and Cooperation,
- Founder of the Macedonian-Israeli Society of Friendship and Cooperation,
- Founder of the Pan-European Union of Macedonia,
- Lifetime member of the Honorary European Senate in Antwerp, Belgium and winner of the title HONORIS CAUSA,
- Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia,
- Consul General of Macedonia in Toronto, Canada (2008 - 2010),
- Head of the Mission of the Republic of Macedonia in NATO under the title of Ambassador (2010 - 2014),
- Co-chairman of the Macedonian-Bavarian Intergovernmental Commission (1999 - 2001),
- Recipient of the St. Martin Peace Plaque in Bratislava, Slovak Republic,
- Tanjug correspondent in Sydney, Australia (1986 - 1989),
- Author of four books – “Unfamiliar Southern Country - Postcards from Australia”, “Ilinden 1903 in the Australian press” and “The Great European”.

- Author of a dozen feature articles,
- Married to prof. Dr. Teodora Poposka Trenevski,
- Father of three girls.