

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta **1910–1997**

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta was born Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu in Skopje, present-day North Macedonia. When Gonxhe was eight, her father died suddenly, plunging the family into financial difficulties. At the age of twelve, Gonxhe felt a divine calling to serve the poor. Upon turning eighteen, she left home, never to see her mother or sister again, and entered the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland, known as the Loreto Nuns, with the desire to serve in India. After learning English in Ireland, she moved to India in 1929 and became a novice at the Loreto house in Darjeeling. In 1931, she made her first Lisieux.



The miracles of St Teresa

1. The first took place in West Bengal, India, and involved the healing of an Indian woman, Monica Besra, whose abdominal tumor was so severe that her doctors abandoned hope of saving her. Taken into the care of the Missionaries of Charity, she continued to decline and endured such agony from the tumor that she could no longer sleep. On the one-year anniversary of Mother's passing, the sisters at the home placed a Miraculous Medal that had been touched to the body of Mother Teresa on Besra's stomach. The suffering woman fell asleep, and when she woke up, her pain was gone. Doctors examined her and found the reason why: The tumor had disappeared completely. A board of medical specialists worked with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to study the alleged miracle. After assessing the

records and interviewing the medical staff involved, the committee determined that the healing was medically inexplicable. Pope John Paul approved the miracle on Dec. 20, 2002, barely five years after Teresa's death.

2. The second miracle took place in December 2008 in Brazil. Marcilio Haddad Andrino, a now-42-year-old mechanical engineer from Santos, Brazil, struggled with a bacterial infection in the brain that caused severe brain abscesses and agonizing head pain. A priest friend encouraged the recently married young man and his wife, Fernanda Nascimento Rocha, to pray for Mother Teresa's help. Andrino, however, slipped into a coma as treatments failed, and while Rocha prayed, he was taken in for last-ditch surgery. When the surgeon entered the operating room, he found Andrino awake and asking him what was going on.

Andrino made a full recovery, and the couple went on to have two children, even though it was deemed by doctors to be a near medical impossibility. Father Kolodiejchuk referred to their children as a second miracle.

In an interview with the Register in December 2015, Father Kolodiejchuk explained why there was a delay between 2008 and 2015. "The miracle happened in 2008," he said, "but we didn't hear about it till 2013. The doctor [neurosurgeon] was not Catholic. Somehow, after the Pope's [Pope Francis] visit there [to Brazil], it triggered him to say something to one of the priests of Santos. That started the chain of events." In September 2015, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints accepted the findings of the medical commission and presented the report to Pope Francis for his final

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approval. On Dec. 17, the Holy Father officially recognized the miracle that was needed for Mother Teresa to be canonized.