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PONTIFF SAYS MOTHER TERESA "INVALUABLE" FOR WORLD

Sends Message to Missionaries for Her 100th Birthday

VATICAN CITY, AUG. 26, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Mother Teresa of Calcutta was an "invaluable gift" for the world during her lifetime, and she continues to be so through the ministry of the order she founded, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope affirmed this in a message to the superior-general of the Missionaries of Charity, Sister Mary Prema. The message was made public today, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, the future Blessed Teresa.

The Holy Father's message invites the Missionaries of Charity to continue to follow Blessed Teresa's example.

He said: "Having responded with trust to the direct call of the Lord, Mother Teresa exemplified excellently the words of St. John: 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. ... [I]f we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us.'"

"May this love continue to inspire you, Missionaries of Charity, to give yourselves generously to Jesus, to all those you see and serve, that is, to the poor, the marginalized, the abandoned. I encourage you to draw constantly from the spirituality and the example of Mother Teresa and, following in her footsteps, to accept Christ's invitation: 'Come and be my light.'"

The Pontiff expressed his trust that the year of the centenary "will be for the Church and for the world an occasion of fervent gratitude to God for the invaluable gift that Mother Teresa was in the course of her life and that she continues to be through the loving and tireless work that you, her spiritual daughters, carry out."

At home

According to [AsiaNews](http://www.asianews.com), the message was read this morning by Archbishop Lucas Sirkar of Calcutta during a Mass presided over by Cardinal Telesphore Toppo, archbishop of Ranchi, India, in the Motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity.

Some 1,000 people attended the Mass, celebrated in the center where Mother Teresa's remains rest, UCAN agency reported.

Before the start of the ceremony, a simple homage took place during which Sisters Nirmala Joshi and Mary Prema, Mother Teresa's first and second successors as superiors of the Missionaries of Charity, released a white dove and balloons.

For his part, Cardinal Toppo lit a candle and put it next to the tomb. "In this centenary, we must listen to Mother's message that we have been created for greater things, to love and to be loved," he said.

The Mass was presided over by the cardinal and concelebrated by Archbishop Sirkar, as well as retired Archbishop Henry D'Souza of Calcutta, Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baruipur, and by the postulator of Mother Teresa's cause for canonization, Father Brian Kolodiejchuk.

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text of papal message: www.zenit.org/article-30160?l=english