

Mother Teresa

AS ONE of christianity's superstars she shunned the limelight, describing herself as a merely a pencil in God's hand.

Now, two years after her death, Pope John Paul II has fast-tracked moves to declare the Albanian nun a saint by waiving a customary five-year waiting period after death for the beatification process to begin.

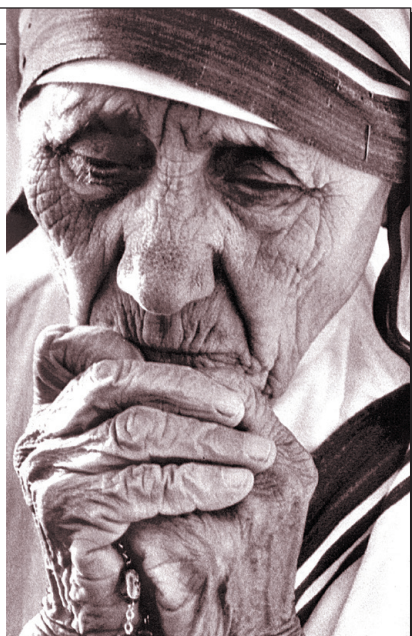
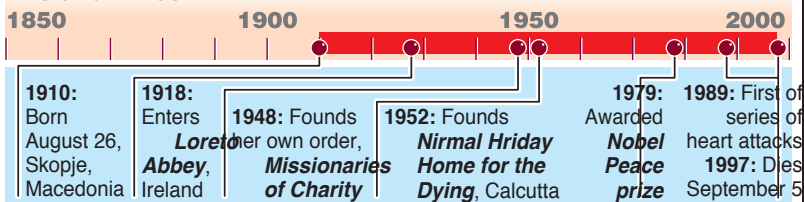
Like many icons of the Christian faith, Mother Teresa – the “Saint of the Gutters” – had a life full of contradictions.

She detested fame, yet could not escape it. Her tiny frame and self-effacing manner masked an iron will and powerful personality that made her a relentless crusader for the poor.

Born **Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu**, she joined a religious order at age 18 and took the name “Teresa” after **St. Teresa of Lisieux**, patroness of the Missionaries.

She was sent to India and began a teaching career before the Catholic church granted her leave from the convent in 1948 so she could work among the poor and dying in Calcutta.

Her order of nuns – the **Missionaries of Charity** – now runs **Life and times...**



hospitals, schools, orphanages, youth centres and shelters. Today there are more than 3,000 sisters in 517 missions throughout 100 countries.

The **Nobel Peace Prize** she won and the headlines she still attracts are testimony to her extraordinary power.

Yet, when asked in an interview with *Time* magazine whether she felt she had any special qualities, she replied: **“I don’t think so. I don’t claim anything of the work. It’s God’s work. I’m like a little pencil in His hand.”**