

Canonising Mother Teresa: The Selling of the Catholic Church

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

Global Research, September 07, 2016

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#),
[Religion](#)

The question is: was a woman who preached virtue in suffering rather than trying to alleviate it and took money from dictators really that saintly at all? Douglas Robertson, The Independent, Sep 5, 2016

In looking at the antics surrounding saintliness, George Orwell's remarks about the important presumption of sinning is all important. It is axiomatic that all saints be presumed sinners. The greater they are in achievement, heavy in the miracles department and achievement, the less likely they are to be the purest of pure.

The story of Mother Teresa of Kolkata is a story of how a modern saint is cultivated and made. The Catholic Church, for all its ceremonial weight and stuffy ritual, has always been, in one sense, modern. Modern to corporate practice; modern to innovative methods of generating wealth; and novel for creating cohorts of public relations promoters known as saints.

The latest addition comes in the form of Mother Teresa, who was canonised on September 4. On being beatified, thereby being given the title of Blessed, the pathway to sainthood was assured. In doing so, the Church succumbed, according to the late Christopher Hitchens, "to the forces of showbiz, superstition, and populism."^[1]

Ever wishing to give a sense of incorporating even dissenters, the Church went so far as to ask Hitchens to play Devil's Advocate. Naturally, the role of *advocatus diaboli* was itself pure show, necessary procedural pomp for an assured outcome. The MT train was chuffing inexorably to final canonisation.

The congenial, even admiring throngs of the notable and unknown have added voices over the years to the Mother Teresa cult. Much of it began with the grovelling tribute of a previously sharp man of letters Malcolm Muggeridge, who found in the Kolkata figure a creature of unquestioned virtue.

In *Something Beautiful for God* (1971), Muggers gushingly suggested that, "the wholly dedicated like Mother Teresa do not have biographies. Biographically speaking, nothing happens to them. To live for, and in, others, as she and the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity do is to eliminate happenings, which are a factor of the ego and the will."

While admitting to not being "enamoured with the idea of sainthood," former volunteer Mari Marcel Thekaekara would still say that she "took dying people off the Kolkata streets. No one else does that."^[2] True, if only for a grander purpose in mind, all ego, and all will.

Thekaekara provides some insight, being one of the Catholic children who volunteered at the orphanage Shishu Bhavan. Mother Theresa the autocrat permanently loomed; respect for elders instilled; religious fervour upheld. Controls were decreed everywhere, from the frequency of nuns writing home, to the consumption of juice in the stifling heat.

There was anger at her techniques, her Christian apologies about poverty, her infuriating straightjacket tyranny. For all that, people were still brought “off filthy pavements” and allowed to “die in dignity.”

Hitchens famously thought otherwise. This “lying, thieving Albanian dwarf” wangled her way into the corridors of power, be they hypocritical evangelicals in the United States or Third World dictators. It did not matter where the money came from.

As Douglas Robertson explained in *The Independent* (Sep 5), Mother Teresa “was a celebrity, with a very well managed brand.” It was a brand that took the most reactionary views of the Church out of the doctrinaire closet and onto the streets, coupled with an unmatched capacity for fund raising through the Missionaries of Charity.

She damned contraception as wounding to husband and wife, an act of selfishness that retarded the natural processes of procreation. Shagging had to lead to having. “This turns to self and so destroys the gift of love in him or her.” She condemned abortion: “If a mother can kill her own child, then what is left of the West to be destroyed?”

Shaming leaders with sanctimonious authority, she would use poverty as her own whip of justification, her own alibi for existence. It mattered that people were poor because this provided some sense of grace – and naturally, a vital role for religious instruction. They were to suffer “like Christ’s passion.” Truly, a sadist in faith’s true employ.

Bone racking, debilitating suffering was solid gold to Mother Teresa, and could only ever be the logical outcome of a faith that insists on suffering in order to be saved. Naturally, she thrived in an environment where misery and poverty were of such levels, and of such depth. Jesus was truly overspending his time kissing everybody.

The cult of sainthood; Jesus lending his lips in repeated acts of generosity; the machine of publicity best seen in the cult of saints. Mother Teresa can now count herself in that company, with her biography well and truly crafted, ego and will acknowledged.

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

Notes

[1] http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2003/10/mommie_dearest.html

[2] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/04/mother-teresa-admiration--sainthood-dying-kolkata>

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **[Dr. Binoy
Kampmark](#)**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca