



Plus receive a **FREE** book when you subscribe today!

NewStatesman

[Login](#) | [Register](#)

- [HOME](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [CULTURE](#)
- [MEDIA](#)
- [LIFE & SOCIETY](#)
- [ENERGY](#)
- [WORLD AFFAIRS](#)
- [COLUMNS](#)
- [BLOGS](#)
- [SUBSCRIBE](#)
- [EVENTS](#)
- [JOBS](#)
- [RELIGION](#)
- [TRAVEL](#)
- [SPORT](#)
- [HEALTH](#)
- [EDUCATION](#)
- [LIFESTYLE](#)
- [SOCIETY](#)

Return to: [Home](#) | [Life & Society](#) | [Society](#)

The Squalid Truth Behind The Legacy Of Mother Teresa

Donal MacIntyre

Published 22 August 2005

- [35 comments](#)
- [Print version](#)
- [Email a friend](#)
- [Listen](#)
- [RSS](#)

The nun adored by the Vatican ran a network of care homes where cruelty and neglect are routine. Donal MacIntyre gained secret access and witnessed at first hand the suffering of "rescued" orphans

The dormitory held about 30 beds rammed in so close that there was hardly a breath of air between the bare metal frames. Apart from shrines and salutations to "Our Great Mother", the white walls were bare. The torch swept across the faces of children sleeping, screaming, laughing and sobbing, finally resting on the hunched figure of a boy in a white vest. Distressed, he rocked back and forth, his ankle tethered to his cot like a goat in a farmyard. This was the Daya Dan orphanage for children aged six months to 12 years, one of Mother Teresa's flagship homes in Kolkata. It was 7.30 in the evening, and outside the monsoon rains fell unremittingly.

Earlier in the day, young international volunteers had giggled as one told how a young boy had peed on her while strapped to a bed. I had already been told of an older disturbed woman tied to a tree at another Missionaries of Charity home. At the orphanage, few of the volunteers batted an eyelid at disabled children being tied up. They were too intoxicated with the myth of Mother Teresa and drunk on their own philanthropy to see that such treatment of children was inhumane and degrading.

Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950 in Kolkata, answering her own calling to "serve the poorest of the poor". In 1969, a documentary about her work with the poor catapulted her to global celebrity. International awards followed, including the Nobel Peace Prize and a Congressional Gold Medal. But when, in her Nobel acceptance speech, she described abortion as "the greatest destroyer of peace today" she started to provoke controversy. She died on 5 September 1997, her name attached to some 60 centres worldwide, and India honoured her with a state funeral. Her seven homes for the poor and destitute of Kolkata, however, are her lasting monument.

I worked undercover for a week in Mother Teresa's flagship home for disabled boys and girls to record *Mother Teresa's Legacy*, a special report for *Five News* broadcast earlier this month. I winced at the rough handling by some of the full-time staff and Missionary sisters. I saw children with their mouths gagged open to be given medicine, their hands flaying in distress, visible testimony to the pain they were in. Tiny babies were bound with cloths at feeding time. Rough hands

Subscribe



NewStatesmanJobs

Enter search term below:

[Find jobs](#)

- [Policy](#) | [Charity & Fundraising](#)
- [Research](#) | [Education](#) |
- [Executive](#) | [Media](#) | [Social Care](#) | [Communications](#)

wrenched heads into position for feeding. Some of the children retched and coughed as rushed staff crammed food into their mouths. Boys and girls were abandoned on open toilets for up to 20 minutes at a time. Slumped, untended, some dribbling, some sleeping, they were a pathetic sight. Their treatment was an affront to their dignity, and dangerously unhygienic.

Volunteers (from Italy, Sweden, the United States and the UK) did their best to cradle and wash the children who had soiled themselves. But there were no nappies, and only cold water. Soap and disinfectant were in short supply. Workers washed down beds with dirty water and dirty cloths. Food was prepared on the floor in the corridor. A senior member of staff mixed medicine with her hands. Some did their best to give love and affection - at least some of the time. But, for the most part, the care the children received was inept, unprofessional and, in some cases, rough and dangerous. "They seem to be warehousing people rather than caring for them," commented the former operations director of Mencap Martin Gallagher, after viewing our undercover footage.

I first learned of the plight of the Kolkata children from two international aid workers, both qualified nurses and committed Catholics. They came to me after working as volunteers for the Missionaries of Charity last Christmas. Both made the comparison with images that emerged from Romanian orphanages in the early 1990s after television news teams first gained access.

"I was shocked. I could only work there [Daya Dan] for three days. It was simply too distressing. . . We had seen the same things in Romania but couldn't believe it was happening in a Mother Teresa home," one told me. In January, she and her colleague had written to Sister Nirmala, the new Mother Superior, to voice their concerns. They wrote, they told me, out of "compassion and not complaint", but received no response. Like me, they had been brought up in Catholic schools to believe that Mother Teresa was the holiest of all women, second only to the Virgin Mary. Our faith was unwavering, as was that of the international media for about 50 years. Even when the sister in charge of the Missionaries of Charity's Mahatma Gandhi Welfare Centre in Kolkata was prosecuted and found guilty of burning a young girl of seven with a hot knife in 2000, criticism remained muted.

The most significant challenge to the reputation of Mother Teresa came from Christopher Hitchens in 1995 in his book *The Missionary Position*. "Only the absence of scrutiny has allowed her to pass unchallenged as a force for pure goodness, and it is high time that this suspension of our critical faculties was itself suspended," he wrote, questioning whether the poor in her homes were denied basic treatment in the belief that suffering brought them closer to God. Hitchens's lonely voice also raised the issue of the order's finances, which in 1995 (and still in July 2005 when we were filming) seemed never to reach Kolkata's poorest.

Susan Shields, formerly a senior nun with the order, recalled that one year there was roughly \$50m in the bank account held by the New York office alone. Much of the money, she complained, sat in banks while workers in the homes were obliged to reuse blunt needles. The order has stopped reusing needles, but the poor care remains pervasive. One nurse told me of a case earlier this year where staff knew a patient had typhoid but made no effort to protect volunteers or other patients. "The sense was that God will provide and if the worst happens - it is God's will."

The Kolkata police force and the city's social welfare department have promised to investigate the incidents in the Daya Dan home when they have seen and verified the distressing footage we secretly filmed. Dr Aroup Chatterjee, a London-based Kolkata-born doctor, believes that if Daya Dan were any other care home in India, "the authorities would close it down. The Indian government is in thrall to the legacy of Mother Teresa and is terrified of her reputation and status. There are many better homes than this in Kolkata," he told us.

Nearly eight years after her death, Mother Teresa is fast on the way to sainthood. The great aura of myth that surrounds her is built on her great deeds helping the poor and the destitute of Kolkata, birthplace of her order, the Missionaries of Charity. Rarely has one individual so convinced public opinion of the holiness of



NewStatesman

Newsletter!

Enter your email address here to receive updates from the team

SIGN UP >

Chronicle of Protest



DVD now on sale!
Click here to find out more

Vote!

Should Business, as opposed to Government, be the main driver for developments in green technology?

yes no

her cause. Her reward is accelerated canonisation.

But her homes are a disgrace to so-called Christian care and, indeed, civilised values of any kind. I witnessed barbaric treatment of the most vulnerable.

The Missionaries of Charity have said that they welcome constructive criticism, and that the children we saw were tied for their own safety and for "educational purposes". Sister Nirmala even welcomed our film: "Our hopes continue to be simply to provide immediate and effective service to the poorest of the poor as long as they have no one to help them . . . May God bless you and your efforts to promote the dignity of human life, especially for those who are underprivileged."

For too long Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity have been blessing critics, rather than addressing justified and damning condemnations of the serious failings in their care practices.

Donal MacIntyre is a reporter and documentary-maker for Channel 5 Television

Get the full magazine for just £1 a week with a trial subscription. PLUS get a free copy of Slavoj Žižek: A Graphic Guide

Post this article to

- Digg
- del.icio.us
- newsvine
- Reddit
- Buzz

Like Send 271 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

People who read this article also read:



An afternoon with the English Defence League

By Laurie Penny
05 September



Don't mention the family

By Jason Cowley
22 August



"I don't see a broken society"

By Mehdi Hasan
24 August



These riots show the cost of consumption

By Sean Carey
09 August

35 comments from readers

Ergo
31 August 2007 at 07:45

It is possible that these children were treated as well as was possible under the circumstances but Christopher Hitchens and others have opened the possibility that there was something very wrong about it all. I tend to be suspicious of "saints", especially people who almost ask to be so considered, and Mother Theresa seemed to me to be one of these. It has been pretty well documented that she believed suffering was good in itself, an unhealthy position her church also seems to endorse. In any case, no person living or dead should be beyond criticism and the kind of effusive adulation associated with her and promoted by her church (and others) always seemed self-serving and a little mad.

lc0644
31 August 2007 at 08:07

Typical of the hypocrisy that one has come to expect from religion!

Anyone who can baldly state that abortion is "the greatest destroyer of peace today" has got their priorities very, very wrong. Let's go poll the survivors of Rwanda and Darfur as to whether they'd agree with that sentiment....it speaks of someone who is so blinded by dogma that they lose basic common sense and compassion. That's the same mentality that breeds Tomas de Torquemada

- VOTE
- Suggest a question
- View comments

Tools & Services

- PDF version
- PDA version
- RSS
- Podcasts
- Email updates
- Special Supplements
- Stockists
- Magazine
- Archive
- Subscribe

shantidas43

01 September 2007 at 17:27

I am sure that there are better institutions of primary care for orphans and the dying in India than these missionary places, nonetheless as anybody that knows India can testify, there are also tens of millions of young and old that are living totally and unredeemably in squalor. What is best? to hope for better care facilities in a hopeful future or do something with the elements that are available. Comparing unfavourably missionary institutions with those of Romania, that I don't know anything about, only reinforces the idea that Westerners cannot overcome their own smugness.

Tam Earl-Aine

01 September 2007 at 18:51

I don't believe for one moment that Donal MacIntyre's primary concern is to attack the Church and I am willing to support his initiatives to help the children he obviously cares so much about. Please let us know how those of us who wish to can help him as he ministers to the thousands of children who suffer in India.

nurstim

04 September 2007 at 21:29

The Church does not teach that suffering in itself is good or should be sought. I have no reason to disbelieve Donal MacIntyre's reporting though I would say such lack of care is due to a falling away from Mother Teresa's vision rather than living up to it. It also seems to me that the best that these places can offer is still far better than the fate they would otherwise face. It also seems to be missed that Mother Teresa was a prophet. She made the world take notice in the hope that others with resources would do something concrete about it (not merely criticise her efforts without getting their own hands dirty).

Douglas Chalmers

05 September 2007 at 19:07

Quote Christopher Hitchens in 1995 in his book *The Missionary Position*. "Only the absence of scrutiny has allowed her to pass unchallenged as a force for pure goodness...."

Well, Christopher Hitchens has had his share of problems too with his tobacco addiction, etc. He and I were both born in 1949, a good year for breeding iconoclasm, atheism, anti-monarchism and acerbic wit but these things, along with atheism, can also have their negative aspects.

Sadly, it is not just the "squalid truth behind the legacy" of one individual but of many and in many such organisations whether founded by religious orders or semi-religious ones such as the Salvation Army. It is often not the workers but the administrators who come into power in successive generations who destroy the reputation for good work by their own egotism.

One must ask with Mother Teresa whether she was eventually suffering some degree of dementia and whether she was really an administrator in the first place? If people can't follow the example, then who can one depend on in running such an organisation? What is worse, though, is when a leader's authority is effectively usurped or subsumed by incompetents.

Perhaps we should also remember that this is a criticism yet again of a situation somewhere in Asia and of different races, cultures and religions. Are we not just re-inforcing our own feelings of white superiority through negative criticism without doing anything ourselves? First, we should sweep our own doorsteps if we wish to see all of the doorsteps in the street clean.

danbrett

06 September 2007 at 13:40

I have a home in Kokata and am a regular resident of the city. Many Kolkatans are frustrated with the idolisation of Mother Teresa, pointing out that philanthropy is an inherent part of Bengali culture. Middle-class Hindus give donations to the poor and run open kitchens on pujas. There are plenty of good orphanages and the work of the Ramakrishna Mission has achieved far more in terms of improving the lives of the poor than Mother Teresa. Sadly, these missions and charities are not on the lips of every white man, giving the impression that only the white man can save the Indian poor.

I once visited Mother Teresa's Hospital for the Destitute and Dying. The dying are literally put on display at the foyer, lying on wooden benches and tended by young white Catholics. I met the nun who had taken over from Teresa; she was a religious fundamentalist who criticised me (she thought I was a Christian) for marrying a Hindu. There is an anti-Hindu and even anti-Indian attitude among the nuns. Their goal is to convert and make money.

It is not unique to this mission. I've read manuals for Catholic missionaries on how to convert tribal people in Jharkhand - the Catholics' objective is to get them to denounce their ancient "false gods", give up their hunting and gathering traditions, wear Western clothes and move away from their remote villages to urban slums. It is a pernicious form of cultural imperialism that has little to do with genuine social change and everything to do with a greedy, hierarchical church abusing its authority in India.

parnassus

06 September 2007 at 17:54

Mother Teresa has been criticised by Evangelical Protestant fundamentalists for saying that her mission was to encourage people to be 'the best Hindus they could be, the best Muslims they could be, the best Buddhists they could be'. They claimed that this wasn't evangelistic enough and that she was going contrary to the spirit of the Bible. And yet other people accuse Mother Teresa of being out to convert everybody.

People take a lot of pleasure in stripping down public icons in the hope of revealing something nasty, which is possibly why there are so many contradictory criticisms of Mother Teresa. I have only this to add: there are over 5,000 Missionaries of Charity now, plus an unknown number of volunteers. There is no guarantee that becoming a religious sister will make you kind, gentle, or holy. When you are dealing with such significant numbers of people, there is a lot of potential for things to go horribly wrong in places.

This doesn't mean that Mother Teresa was the callous opportunist that some people try to label her as. For one thing, if all she was interested in was making money then she wouldn't have become a nun as a teenager. It's also important to remember that she was working with the poor of Calcutta for nineteen years before she was 'discovered' and made famous. A woman just out to make a fabulous sum of money is unlikely to have the patience for that.

She had her faults, like everyone else. But I think she had integrity and a genuine desire to do what was right.

As for her 'dark night of the soul' being the result of her reason rebelling against her faith, that doesn't make any sense at all. Anyone who reads Mother Teresa's theological insights will see that she had very clear and profound ideas on an intellectual level. Her pain was entirely emotional, and this is where atheists like Hitchens get confused - they will insist on labelling faith as a feeling, and vice versa.

Ergo

06 September 2007 at 22:27

I don't agree with Hitchens' position on a number of topics, but hey, he doesn't promote himself as a saint, doesn't command anywhere near the attention or has the status of Mother Teresa and is entitled to his

opinions and arguments. If the Catholic church doesn't think suffering is good in itself it has a funny way of showing it by insisting that women's essential role in life is that of nurturer and back-seat taker. Sure, self-sacrifice when it isn't pathological is good

but is a contradiction when you have no choice.

The Church's views on artificial birth-control seems a little punitive and disproportionate when it can be tied directly to the suffering and death of millions in Africa and elsewhere. "Natural" birth control is also contradicted by the idea of husband as "head or

boss" of the family. Mother Teresa said publicly that were she in charge, all women who had abortions would be jailed. Nice, - and Christian. For that reason I am willing to believe that she might have been a little unnecessarily parsimonious when it came to

providing a few modest creature comforts, for dying aids patients for instance. I understand she did actually say that suffering was good, and that conforms to her reported behavior. At a slightly different angle, why are some so begrudging of the attention directed to the former Princess Diana and

as opposed to Mother Theresa? Aren't saints supposed to do their good works in obscurity? We may be fairly certain Diana will never be "pronounced" a saint - not by the church anyway.

danbrett

07 September 2007 at 00:55

Just one point to note. Teresa was a great friend of Nikolai Ceaucescu, who did so much for the poor kids of Romania. Perhaps he taught her how to chain them to their beds.

parnassus: I don't think that all public figures should be derided just for the sake of it. Yes, everyone is fallible, everyone has their vices. But it is one thing to be a self-destructive but brilliant singer such as Amy Winehouse, and it is quite another to be responsible for the institutionalised abuse of vulnerable children. So, I will always place Amy Winehouse well above Mother Teresa, particularly in terms of personal morality. Teresa's abusive treatment of children is well-known in Kolkata and there are Indian Hindu and secular organisations that serve a far wider number of people than Teresa's missionaries.

Park Street in Kolkata (the city's equivalent of Oxford Street) was renamed Mother Teresa Sarani after her death. Unlike Ho Chi Minh Sarani (renamed in honour of the Vietnamese leader), absolutely no Kolkatan, no official and no business based on the street will use the new name. They don't like her and for good reasons. But corruption in the Communist-run state government and vested interests in the Catholic Church ensured that she could continue her "work" beyond public scrutiny.

Pierre

11 September 2007 at 14:40

Religious sects that discriminate against women should have their charitable statue removed.

gnuneo

19 September 2007 at 22:49

corruption at the core spreads outward.

cajunthinker

06 October 2007 at 00:30

I am amazed at the contradictory criticisms of Teresa. It must be noted that a study of the sacrifices made in her personal life were momentous and could not be undertaken for the many years that she lived in such a way except someone with a very deep and, perhaps, divinely inspired faith.

One who studies Catholic mystical writings will see that what Teresa was writing about was the lack of a mystical connection with God after communications regarding her vocation. Such "dark night" experiences always accompany mystical union, often for many years. The continued life of sacrifice, mortification and penance despite the "dark night" for decades tends to underscore her deep faith, not the opposite.

bob

23 January 2008 at 02:57

Parnassus: the idea that if Mother Teresa wasn't a saint, in the popular sense of the word, she was a callous opportunist, is too simple. Plainly, she was intensely committed to what she did, but it seem fairly plain also that she was interested in poverty as a theological rather than a social problem, and in some sense enjoyed and even promoted it. She probably never really wanted all the money that poured in and clearly didn't put any thought into using it effectively to make life better. She wanted to wade through those who were suffering and dying, pressing wet cloths to their foreheads and whispering words of comfort about Jesus, and had little or no interest in doing what she could to make sure that fewer people ever got to that point. The hundreds of millions of dollars pouring in were an obstacle to this renunciation of the flesh, being aimed at addressing an entirely different conception of poverty and its meaning, and it seems that she largely preferred to ignore it, or allow it to find its way into the general budget of the Vatican.

Is this compatible with saintliness? Certainly in its religious sense, it is. She promoted the faith, renounced the world, helped the suffering. But Orwell's thoughts on saintliness are pertinent here: it is an inhuman ambition that makes humanity into a religious abstraction: "if one is to love God, or to love humanity as a whole, one cannot give one's preference to any individual person. This ... marks the point at which the humanistic and the religious attitude cease to be reconcilable." Mother Teresa was a religious. She worked in the worldview and theology of the Catholic church, serving its ends, not those of the people she acted upon, while collecting money at a mad rate from well-meaning people who thought that she was something like a social worker or an ordinary charity, not someone who believed that suffering was a beautiful part of God's plan, to be selflessly joined with, not briskly and pragmatically attacked.

So, maybe she was a saint, but not at all the sort of saint that people generally think of when they use the word. She was a Real Catholic Saint which, it turns out, is maybe not such a nice thing.

sargael

11 March 2008 at 12:42

Good heavens! Mother Teresa has at least the merit of having done what it would taken lives for these foul-mouthed miscreants and calumniators to do. It's sickening that atheists, secularists and what other bizarre individuals dare assess the charitable works of a nun when not a single atheist organisation has yet run succesful kitchen soups. Sickening and decadent, that's it.

mandywinn

01 April 2008 at 17:55

Anger and agression often accompany oranized religion and patrons. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religions have provisions in their doctrine supporting physical and emotional pain as righteous. Mother Teresa endorsed her life's work on the

doctrine of pain; something right out of the dark ages.

Now that we are in a new millenia can't we forget all that awful dark attitude of suffering as beautiful? There is nothing beautiful about making people suffer, watching people suffer, causing people to suffer needlessly, nor act as if one is nearer to God because they suffer. All that twisted perverted dogma from middle eastern religions is so very yesterday.

Because the world has technology, global communication, and expanding educational resources there is no reason to embrace those dark religions of the past and their deeply flawed philosophies. There is nothing beautiful about anger, aggression, violence, dehumanizing conditions when in fact there are ample resources to stop all of it. Once people stop believing in religion people can then move towards God in a meaningful life by helping rather than "believing" in invisible beings, twisted personal views of history, and political agendas.

One can still believe in God, love Jesus, and every other super human philosopher without having to practice a religion, especially those dirty old religions of the past. Let it all go and move toward the light of the world. Be nice, work hard, pay it forward, and stop practicing religion. Good God!

edwardcullen

29 April 2008 at 22:58

I personally have worked in daya dan orphanage and while conditions there certainly aren't ideal the cruelty and callousness that donal macintyre describes was never present while i was there. Each child was looked after to the best of the facilities available. I saw no child chained to a wall or anything else. There were bars at the edges of their beds as there is in most cots in western homes also; to protect the children. There were singsongs and each child got shown love and affection by the volunteers. The orphanage itself was brightly decorated and as clean as possible with over 20 children living there. Perhaps there are better homes in Calcutta but daya dan is far from being the worst. In a place where there are limited facilities i believe that the nuns and volunteers are doing as best a job as they can and to criticise them for this is wrong. Maybe Mother Theresa wasn't as wonderful as everyone believes but the work that she inspired in Calcutta is remarkable, with people from all over the world trying their hardest to improve life, just a small bit, for these children.

Goddess3

13 May 2008 at 16:05

Why are the good ones always attacked, soiled and even sometimes murdered? Because love, devotion and light always awakens the pathological jealousy and anger of the empty, fearful and controlling people. Narcissists HATE full, giving, loving people.

B-Ward

22 June 2008 at 11:31

Why is it nobody is bothering to address the issue at heart? fact is no charity should ever be above scrutiny and should not be immune from being inspected. Having worked for a real life charity that had the best of intentions ,however, they were anything but properly run. In the end it took the police to deal with it. So really stop with the talk of airy fairy religious dogma and actually deal with the issue at heart!- children at risk.

adamsmorgan

02 July 2008 at 22:30

I suggest walking a mile in her shoes first (how about 40 years?), then criticizing her. Go to a poor city by yourself and start an orphanage. Give up everything. Work at it all your life until you die. Then watch people criticize you. Jeesh!

Christopher Hitchens lives here in Washington. He's a pompous Englishman who makes his living off Americans, just like Andrew Sullivan. He should return to the U.K. and attack its ridiculous monarchy, frilly hats and crowns and all, and its class system.

Maria

18 September 2008 at 22:25

Westerners cannot overcome their own smugness... danbrett is among those persons. First he writes:

'Teresa was a great friend of Nikolai Ceaucescu, who did so much for the poor kids of Romania. Perhaps he taught her how to chain them to their beds.'

...and then:

'But corruption in the Communist-run state government and vested interests in the Catholic Church ensured that she could continue her "work" beyond public scrutiny.'

Well...

I've always doubted Ceaușescu ever told caretakers to chain poor children to their beds. And there were also Romanian orphanages where poor or disabled children arrived which did offer proper care to children, yet you in the West must have only seen those other orphanages, as intentionally and deliberately aired by the Western media, where caretakers were cruel and inhuman. Why didn't the caretakers help and provide for those poor children you must have seen on television?... Why weren't THEY human if, say, the Romanian leader was not?...

Dielli

02 February 2009 at 17:57

If anyone doesn't like the work/methods of Mother

Teresa and her missionaries, please go take those children off the orphanages and make them a bed to your homes. I've served several times to her missions in my country, and never saw such cruelty described here.

The sisters keep the money and resources they need to for doing their work as pors do. The rest goes to the church for its needs. Mother Teresa has given us the best example on how to start doing good things out of nothing. Please, start exercising this starting from now at your homes. Love your children, stop abortion, be faithful to your family, and most of all, stop sending your parents at special institutions. If you don't do this now, then stop complaining about the work that others do instead of you.

Pax at bonum!

Linda

14 January 2011 at 17:41

I trust the Church will rule accordingly regarding Mother Theresa. Mother Theresa

has been quoted as saying, "I think it's very good when people suffer." The volunteers weren't trained medical staff. I don't know, you'd think they'd have more common sense and use the funds to make the poor's lives better but maybe that wasn't their mission. Did Mother Theresa only intend on giving the sick a more dignified place to die? Wasn't it ever her intent to treat anyone? At least a dingy building is better than the streets? it's upsetting to know that the money was sitting there and wasn't used to help anyone. It's upsetting to see the sick, orphaned and handicapped treated so roughly. It's upsetting. I don't know. The Church will rule. Personally, though, I don't feel comfortable praying to someone who thinks it's good when people suffer. Would she really help anyone??? When my daughter was in the hospital I prayed to Mother Theresa and put a relic on my daughter's surgical site that wouldn't heal. It didn't get better and if anything it got worse. So the Church will rule on Mother Theresa's holiness or lack of thereof. As for me, I'll take my prayers directly to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. To be fair, I've never been helped by a saint...save for St. Anthony in helping me to find things. I just go to the 'Top', now.

paul kennedy
12 February 2011 at 08:16

to be totally honest mother tereasa was a caring person that handed out food and medicine to the hungry and poor she also raised indias plight to raise money to buy the food from people all over the world including hindus and india people ..But as for being a saint or a angel i doubt that because some people in australia like reverend ted noffs have been handing out food for 50 years to the homeless that doesnt mean hes a saint or should be one and he would be far more deserving of it them mother tereasa .Her biggest mistake in life was saying what she did about abortions

Annalisa Considine
24 February 2011 at 09:41

i volunteered at a orphanage in vietnam last year and the conditions described about children being tied up and force fed are all too familiar, but necessary.

due to the large number of children and small amount of staff, you cant sit for an hour making areoplane noises to one child when you have to feed another 10 before you leave. One of the boys was blind, and it was obviously distressing him. so much to the point he was pushing his eyeballs out of his sockets. do you see now why he had to be restrained?

the conditions arnt picture perfect, but their the best under the circumstances.

id rather be getting force fed and tied to a bed than on the streets with no food at all.

Yobi 81
14 March 2011 at 07:38

I find it extremely hypocritical for someone who has not lived a day of his life in a developing country (other than to scavenge for dirt on someone) to even dare publish such an article and expect people who have any idea of what is going on in the developing world to believe it. I think this sort of bashing is geared towards people who do not believe in the goodness of people, and thereby make no requirements on their own ability to give and to love. I invite you, Mr. Macintyre to spend four hours in any standard orphanage or home for children, mentally stable and unstable, in a developing country and see how you cope. Orphanages are not meant to be glimmering castles that have hot water and electricity...orphanages are meant to protect and care for children who otherwise would be susceptible to rape, abuse from distant family members, starvation, and unavoidably death. I salute the men and women of this world who have the guts to dedicate every single waking moment of their lives to help another person. What have you done recently?

Paul

16 March 2011 at 12:33

To: Yobi 81 Thank you so much for your voice in this discussion. I agree 100 per cent with you.

It is easy to be critic and sit in comfort of your house.

Respect for all people giving love to poor.

They don't have time sit and read forums and articles like this.

Thanks God because last thing they need is criticism.

viQleS

13 April 2011 at 04:44

@Linda: You "trust the church to rule"?

Yeah - because the one thing the catholic church is known for is it's ability to take care of problems (and crimes) in a fair and just manner with full transparency and not a trace of bias.

And just in case I'm misinterpreting you - the other thing the catholic church is good at is ruling. We should definitely put the catholic church in charge of everything - that couldn't possibly go wrong.

viQleS

13 April 2011 at 04:49

Yobi 81: "Orphanages are not meant to be glimmering castles that have hot water and electricity..."

I wonder how much money it would take to build a nice orphanage in Kolkhata with hot water and electricity.

Would \$50 million get you close? I guess not...

Gerry MacGregor

30 June 2011 at 01:39

An Evil Demon from Hell. When She came to Edinburgh in the '80,s, at the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis she declared that the use of contraception, even to prevent disease, was a sin against God. She herself was a sin against God and she created a hell on earth for those who were dependant on her 'mercy'

Gerry MacGregor

30 June 2011 at 01:48

And, btw, she also colluded in the RC churches sexual abuse of children and the hit squads who assassinated orphans in Rio de Janiero. She was one of the most evil people ever to disgrace the name of God. Her right wing benefactors loved her but none of their donated millions ever reached the 'poor and dying' of Calcutta. May she burn in hell alongside all other charlatans who quote her as blessed.

Heather

11 September 2011 at 21:15

You would think with all the guilded marble buildings in Vatican City and the money taken in by the Catholic Church as well as their high opinion of Theresa's work, they would funnel some of the money out of their coffers to help the truly needy already here and suffering around the world, instead of curtailing something as vague and petty as abortion and birth control. Birth control and abortion could have prevented those poor children being in these squalid holes with sub-par

caregivers with less than what is needed to prevent their suffering. It sad and disgusting on so many levels from the Pope down to Theresa. I don't call her a mother, because mothers don't let God's children suffer. It is straight-up evil.

paul
17 September 2011 at 17:56

she might have been an old school ignoramus, probably living in the dark ages, faithful to the roman catholic church, how can you believe in an institute that is run by celibates, gay priests looking at choir boys, sexually frustrated monks, lesbian nuns, how can you look up to these people. these people were her spokespersons, she must have been thick, no imagination of her own, brainwashed. dan brown got it right, its totally corrupt, theyre getting handouts from the mafia. dont go to church, its all man made bullshit, how can you listen to somebody whose never had a normal life! beating themselves with brambles before breakfast, over interested in the gay novices, its all bent! its sad that people believe in going to church. she probably thought it was all right. never trust a care worker!

paul
17 September 2011 at 18:42

she was a care worker! some are smashing up their homes in sheer overpowering psychotic madness, theyre taken away by care workers who put these people on super strong mind numbing toxic anti-psychotic drugs for every day for the rest of their miserable and thereafter doomed lives. brainwashed daily. ignored and force fed. reduced to the state of an embicile. held down and injected and imprisoned for years-incarcerated. reduced to a dwindling drooling vegetable, unable to go to the toilet alone. locked into seclusion rooms, beaten when not watched. all under the hands of a "care worker," and thats when things are going well. never trust any body who is a so called "care worker!" thay laugh at you and empty your wallet whilst your coffin is being measured and youre in your death throes. these people have got such weighty problems, theyre forcing you to live them! theyre dangerous.

paul
17 September 2011 at 19:07

my so called "care worker" studied in "business management," changed her name three times, blocked my toilet and took my money, then emptied my apartment whilst i was sick. obviously havent seen her again! now theres another one! care workers!

Post your comment

Name:

Message:

Email address:

(Your email address will not be published)

What is the answer to this sum?



Answer:

This article was originally published on 22 August 2005 in the issue
Have you heard the one about. . .

[Home](#) [Contact Us](#) [Subscribe](#) [Magazine](#) [About Us](#) [Jobs](#) [Advertise](#) [Sponsorship](#) [Stockists](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Accessibility](#)

© New Statesman 1913 - 2010