Love never fails.
Mother Teresa

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1 Corinthians 13:8a “Love never fails.”



A young woman of eighteen arrives in Ireland in 1928. She has left her family and home in what is now North Macedonia because she believes God is calling her to become a missionary. She arrives at Loreto Abbey just outside Dublin, to learn English before travelling to India. In January 1929 she arrives in Calcutta. She takes the religious name Sister Teresa and spends almost twenty years teaching in a Loreto school.

In 1946, during a train journey, she experiences what she later describes as a “call within a call”. She believes Jesus is asking her to leave the convent and serve the poorest people living in the streets and slums of Calcutta.

In 1948, she exchanging her religious habit for a simple white sari with a blue border. She goes out with very little, not knowing quite how the work will unfold. She begins by teaching children in the slums, visiting families and caring for people who are sick and have nowhere else to turn. She brings people who are dying on the streets into places where they can receive care and dignity in their final hours. She also establishes a home for abandoned children. Gradually, others join her, and in 1950 the Missionaries of Charity is established.

Reflective questions — Have you ever sensed God leading you somewhere, but found the path uncertain or difficult? What would it take to leave behind security and follow where you believe He is calling you?

Reflective pause — 30 seconds

But there is something remarkable about Mother Teresa’s story that the world did not see. After her death in 1997, letters she had written to her spiritual advisers were published. They revealed that, for much of her life, she had experienced profound spiritual darkness. She wrote of feeling that God was absent, that she could not hear His voice or feel His presence. At times, she questioned whether He was there at all. This experience began around the time she started her work among the poor and continued for almost fifty years.

Think about that. The woman the world associated with extraordinary faith and devotion was privately struggling with the feeling that God was nowhere to be found. And yet she continued to pray. She continued to lead her sisters; she continued to care for the poor and to respond to those who needed her.

As the years passed, her health deteriorated. She suffered heart attacks and was repeatedly hospitalised. Yet even in her final months, she continued to meet people, encourage her sisters and attend to the needs of the community.

Reflective question — What do you do when God seems distant? Can you continue to love when you feel empty yourself? What might help you remain faithful when you cannot hear His voice or understand His purpose?

Reflective pause — 30 seconds

Let Mother Teresa’s example inspire you to embrace a love that never fails: a love that continues to pray, to serve and to care, even when the way is dark.