

Cause Celebre?

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The Indian edition of Dr Gëzim Alpion's acclaimed Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity? is a ground-breaking study of one of India's – and the Catholic world's – most enigmatic figures and is due for release this week.

Alpion, a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Birmingham, has probed into the early life of Mother Teresa – or, as she was then known, Agnes Gonxhe Bojaxhiu – in order to examine the origins of her religious devotion and charity work. He believes that the early loss of her father sparked a spiritual search for a new father figure in her life, and prompted her to join the Loreto order of nuns as a teenage novice.

Alpion's book sets out to examine the fame of Mother Teresa, and the high profile of her charity work in the slums of Calcutta (Kolkata). He argues that she was well aware of the impact of media attention, and made full use of it in securing donations and support for her Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa was criticised for this by some, from within the Catholic hierarchy and by media figures both in and outside India. Some disagreed with her orthodox Catholicism; others argued that she did not do enough to alleviate the root causes of poverty. Nevertheless, she was beatified as the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta after her death in 1997.

Alpion examines the figure of Mother Teresa as described in critical and positive press, and constructs an informed, impartial overview of the life of this extraordinary woman.

Notes to Editors:

Dr Gëzim Alpion is an acclaimed academic, writer, playwright, journalist, and a media, political and culture analyst. His books include Vouchers (2001), Foreigner Complex: Essays and Fiction about Egypt (2002), If Only the Dead Could Listen (2008), and the forthcoming Encounters with Civilizations: From Alexander the Great to Mother Teresa (2008). At present, he is Lecturer in Sociology and Media Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK.

Gëzim Alpion's Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity? was initially published in paperback and hardback in London by Routledge in October 2006 and in New York and Canada in December 2006.

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