Asia's 'UCA News Agency' and 'Catholic News India' cover POLSIS forthcoming Conference on Charisma

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Rome based UCA News correspondent interviews POLSIS academic Dr Gëzim Alpion (/staff/profiles/government-society/alpion-gëzim.aspx) on Charisma Conference to be held on Friday, 03 June 2011. UCA News is an Asian Independent Catholic News Agency. The article was run also by CathNews India.

Blessed Teresa's charisma in focus

UK conference to look at why Missionaries of Charity sister is so well loved

C. M. Paul, Vatican City, April 13, 2011

Coming on the heels of revelations in Belfast that she was forced out of Ireland 40 years ago, an international academic conference on charisma in the United Kingdom has scheduled a study of Mother Teresa's Enduring Charisma for June 03 2011.

"The purpose of the conference is to explore how charisma operates and is studied in postmodernity when many people apparently have done away with God," says the coordinator of the day-long charisma conference, Doctor Gëzim Alpion, lecturer in sociology and expert in fame and celebrity culture at the University of Birmingham.

A fellow Albanian and leading academic expert on Blessed Teresa, Dr. Alpion will present at the conference the paper: 'Charisma and Charisma in Postmodernity – A Critique of the Miracle Discourse in Mother Teresa Scholarship'.

Asked if the conference will explore charisma in the context of celebrity culture, Dr Alpion said: "I hope not. This is not a conference on shallow celebrities or celebrity culture for that matter. I understand the need to study celebrity culture but also personally detest celebrity culture for creating the illusion that success and upward social mobility are easily accessible in capitalism."

When asked how Blessed Teresa differs from other celebrities, Dr Alpion said: "As an iconic charismatic figure, Mother Teresa brings together the religious and the secular as no other figure in modern times.

While Blessed Teresa "did not perform miracles in a biblical sense," added Dr. Alpion, "her new revolutionary and visionary take on missionary work as 'faith in action' and her lifetime spiritual aridity and exemplary devotion to Christ are nothing short of miracles which the Vatican should consider sooner rather than later as valid proof to canonize Mother Teresa."

The conference is organised around three main themes: religion and charisma; charisma and leadership; and mediated charisma.

Presenters will address, among other things, the importance of the individual in history; personality cult in totalitarian societies and religious orders; charismatic leaders / heroes in Western democracies and beyond; the relationship between charisma, consumerism and mass culture; and explore the nature of Blessed Teresa's enduring charisma.

More information:

- **www.cathnewsindia.com (http://www.cathnewsindia.com/2011/04/13/blessed-teresa%e2%80%99s-charisma-in-focus/)**

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