

**MOTHER TERESA - A SHINING STAR** The story is told about Mother Teresa after she died and went to heaven. God of course, greeted her at the Pearly Gates. "Are you hungry Mother Teresa?" said God. "I could eat," Mother Teresa replied. So God opened up a can of tuna fish and reached for a chunk of rye bread and they shared it. While eating this meal, Mother Teresa looked down into hell and saw the inhabitants down there devouring huge steaks, lobsters, pheasants, pastries, and wines. Curious, but deeply trusting, she remained quiet. The next day, God again invited her for a meal. Again, it was tuna fish and rye bread. Once again, Mother Teresa saw the denizens of hell enjoying caviar, champagne, lamb, truffles, and chocolates. Still, she said nothing. The following day, it was dinner time and again another can of tuna fish was opened. But she couldn't contain herself any longer. Meekly, she said, "Dear God, I am grateful to be in heaven with You as a reward for my humble, obedient life. But here in heaven, all we get to eat is tuna and a piece of rye bread and in the other place they eat like kings! I don't understand it!" God sighed and said, "Let's be honest Mother. For just two people does it really pay to cook?" I don't mean to be irreverent and hopefully there will be more people in heaven than just two! But in any event, we do know that Mother Teresa is now in heaven, for she is a canonized saint. Last Sunday, September 4th, in an impressive ceremony at the Vatican, Pope Francis formally declared her a Saint of the Catholic Church-her Feast Day being September 5th. I think that many people believed that Mother Teresa was a saint even while she was alive because she followed Jesus and his teachings so closely. During the course of her lifetime, Mother Teresa worked with the poorest of the poor not only in India, but all across the world. The order that she founded, the Missionaries of Charity, continues her work today. I can't forget the first time I saw Mother Teresa. She came to our Diocesan seminary in Yonkers- Saint Joseph's back in 1984 and addressed all of us in the prayer hall. She was rather frail looking and stooped over yet her words and her very presence had a power that was overwhelming. She told us as future priests that the most important thing was to be holy and to love God-a simple message yet one that is very profound and necessary to hear over and over again. Mother Teresa prayed a great deal-two hours before the Blessed Sacrament daily. Her activity, her interest and concern for the poor and destitute emanated from the Eucharistic Body of Christ. She literally "saw" Jesus Christ in those whom she served. I think we should take a cue from her in our own lives. Each of us too, in our own way and in our own time can be a force for good in our world. We do not have to be a religious priest to do it either. If there is some good that can be good, why not do it now-do it today! Mother Teresa once compared Christians to an electrical wire. The current is God. She said, "We have the power to let the current pass through us, use us, so as to produce the light of the world. Or we can refuse to be used and allow darkness to spread." Let us follow her example and spread the light of Christ today!

Sincerely in Christ,

Father Jerome