

Mother Teresa

The Story of the Saint of Calcutta



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Library of Congress Control Number: 2017955305

CIP data is available.

Originally published by Pauline Books & Media, Seoul, Korea. All rights reserved.

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Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in the U.S.A.

MTTP VSAUSAPEOILL9-1510097 4966-9

www.pauline.org

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

22 21 20 19 18

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Little Rosebud

Skopje [SKO-pyeh], Yugoslavia, in 1915.

“Wash up quickly, children,” Mama Drana [DRAH-nah] instructed. “Your father will be home soon.” Twelve-year-old Aga [AH-guh] took her little sister, Agnes, by the hand to help her wash her face. Seven-year-old Lazar [LAH-zahr] followed. When they had finished washing, they heard the front door open and close.

“Where’s my little Rosebud?” Nikola Bojaxhiu [NEE-ko-lah boy-ah-CHEW] called out.

“Papa!” Five-and-a-half-year-old Agnes laughed. Then she ran into her father’s outstretched arms. “I’m right here!”

“Where are your brother and sister?” Papa Nikola asked.

“They’re coming. We were playing a game in the parlor. Lazar was winning,” the little girl said with a slight pout.

Papa Nikola smiled and patted her head. “I hope you were being a good sport,” he said.

“I tried to be one. But I do like to win,” the little girl replied. “Papa, you know what tomorrow is, right?”

“Tomorrow is Sunday,” Papa Nikola said. “There is no council meeting, and my business will be closed. But I seem to recall that something special is happening. . . .” He tapped his daughter’s nose.

“Don’t you remember?” Agnes asked, her eyes opened widely. “I make my first Holy Communion tomorrow! I’m going to receive Jesus!”

“How could I forget something so important?” her father replied. “I just wanted to make sure *you* remembered!”

The next day, at the family’s parish church, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Agnes received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time.

After Mass, Agnes could not wait to speak with her mother. “I love Jesus so much! When I received him, I felt like he was telling me how much he loves me. I will always love him.”



Heartbreak

“A nice carriage is pulling up!” Lazar reported.

“That must be your father,” Mama Drana replied. “He’s been away for so long on business. I didn’t know when to expect him home.” Mama Drana got up and smoothed her dress. Then she opened the door to greet her husband. But Papa Nikola was not standing outside. Instead there was a man she did not know.

“Hello, Madame,” the man said. “I am the ambassador from Italy. I was with your husband in Ireland—”

“Where is my Nikola?” she asked.

Agnes, who was now eight years old, stood behind her mother. She listened to everything the man with the funny accent said.

“He’s in the carriage. My driver will bring him in.” The man paused. Holding his hat in his hands, he continued.

“I’m sorry to tell you this, Madame Bojaxhiu, but your husband became very sick during the conference. I brought him home in my carriage to keep him as comfortable as possible.”

My papa! Agnes thought, tears filling her eyes. *I hope Mama can make him better.*

But Papa Nikola’s health did not improve. Shortly after he was brought home, Papa Nikola was rushed to the local hospital.

Later, Mama Drana sat down with Aga, Lazar, and Agnes and gave them the tragic news. “Your papa was very sick. The doctors did all they could to help him. They operated on him, but . . .” She took a shaky breath and continued, “Children, your papa has died.”

They all cried and hugged one another for a long time. Agnes could not believe her father was gone. “I’ll miss Papa so much,” she said.

“What will we do, Mama?” Aga asked.

“I’ll miss your father too. But we must continue as best we can. We’ll live and act as your papa would want,” Mama Drana said. “And right now, that means praying together as we do every evening. Who will lead the Rosary tonight? We can pray it for your papa’s soul and for others who have lost loved ones today.”

Agnes dried her eyes. “I can lead us tonight,” she offered. “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. . . .”

