

The Mother Teresa Institute (MTI) continued its busy schedule through the summer and early fall. The highlight was the fourth annual Colloquium and Keynote Lecture on September 5 and 6. We also completed our first book reading partnership program with a parish in Palmyra, PA (read more about these two programs later in the newsletter). We also made several efforts to enhance our research capacity by adding materials to our digital archives and expanding our access to the Mother Teresa archives at the Catholic University of America (CUA). As we move into the fall, we will be promoting Mother Teresa's legacy with conference presentations, working to create a dedicated academic journal for the institute, and continuing to expand and organize our digital and physical materials to provide enhanced resources for visiting scholars. We have also established a collaborative partnership with the Center for Carmelite Studies at CUA and International Marian Research Institute in Dayton, Ohio. Finally, we will be planning two events for next year – in addition to the annual Colloquium – these will include a Student Research Symposium and 20th Century Saints Collaborative Project.

Message from the Director

In a 1947 letter to the Archbishop of Calcutta, Ferdinand Périer, Mother Teresa described three inner, imaginative visions she experienced that year. The second vision focused on Our Lady:

Again that great crowd – I could see great sorrow and suffering in their faces – I was kneeling near Our Lady, who was facing them - I did not see her face, but I heard Her say, "Take care of them – They are mine – bring them to Jesus – Carry Jesus to them – Fear not. Teach them to say the Rosary – the family Rosary and all will be well - Fear not – Jesus and I will be with you and your children.

Mother was known for her love of the Rosary. It can be said with certainty that the Rosary was one of Mother Teresa's favorite prayers. One priest of Kolkata affirms, "She had a special devotion to the Rosary. Regularly, if she were free, she would say the Rosary. And if we traveled with her, she would say, 'Let us pray the Rosary.' In addition to praying the Rosary daily during Holy Hour (Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament), she and the Sisters would also pray it while they were out in the streets. As Sr. Gertrude recalls, "On April 27, the very next day after I joined Mother, I accompanied her for the first time into the slums of Motijhil. We passed through the streets saying the Rosary." In fidelity to Our Lady's request, the Rosary was also taught to Catholics (and others) by the Missionaries of Charity.

A senior Sister affirms, "[W]hen I saw Mother praying the rosary, I thought of a little child clinging to the hand of its mother." Holding the rosary in her hand was a sign of Mother Teresa's intimate relationship with Our Lady. This way, she felt united to Our Lady and protected by her maternal presence and intercession.

Sr. Clare, MC, recalls an incident from her time as a student at St. Mary's Loreto School when Mother Teresa was the principal: "One incident - when Mother was the Principal of the school, and there was no food for 300 boarders, but she had unshakeable faith. She suggested that we say the Rosary, and she had absolutely no doubt that Our Lady would provide some food. There was just nothing in the kitchen. As we were praying the Rosary, a truck arrived with cooked and uncooked food. Her unshakeable faith was rewarded."

As Mother Teresa, we can have complete confidence in Our Lady and follow her example of daily praying the Rosary for our own intentions and especially for peace in the world.

~ Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC

Upcoming 2025-2026 Events Schedule

AUG 19-NOV 11, 2025	Mother Teresa Exhibit at John Paul II Shrine (Washington, DC)
OCT 2-4, 2025	World Christianity Conference Presentations, Marquette Univ.
OCT 9, 2025	Release of Call for Papers for Student Research Symposium
NOV-DEC 2025	Advent Reading Partnership Program
MAR 5, 2026	Submissions Due for Student Research Symposium
MAR 2026	Lent Reading Partnership Program
APR 24, 2026	Student Research Symposium (MTI)
JUN-AUG 2026	Summer Reading Partnership Program
SEP 5, 2026	Annual Colloquium & Keynote Lecture / Mother Teresa's Feast Day
Fall 2026	20 th Century Saints Conference (TBD)

Publication Review

Kolodiejchuk, Brian, MC, Editor. *Mother Teresa: Just a Pencil in God's Hand – Reflections in Honor of a Saint*. Washington, DC: Mother Teresa Institute, 2024.

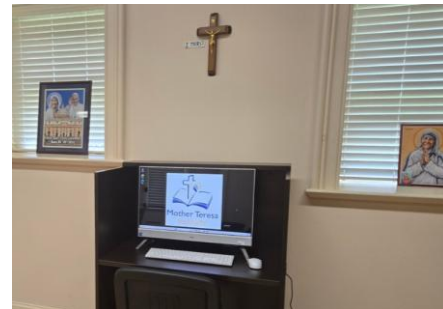
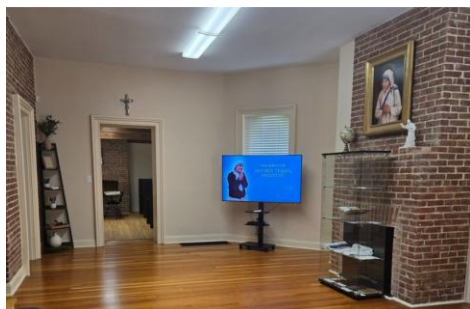
In remembrance of Mother Teresa's feast day on September 5, the Mother Teresa Institute sponsors an annual academic colloquium to explore various aspects of her life and spirituality. This volume features the presentations from the speakers at the inaugural event in 2022, as well as the keynote lecture from 2023. As Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC, describes in the introduction, "each paper testifies to Mother Teresa's enduring legacy, providing readers an opportunity to contemplate her steadfast dedication and honor the legacy of one of the twentieth century's most profound figures." This accessible and insightful volume should be of interest to those seeking to more deeply explore Mother Teresa's spirituality, worldview, and other historical and theological perspectives of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century.

Please forward information for published articles or materials to mti@mtinstitute.org.

Words from Mother Teresa

Reconciliation begins not first with others but with ourselves: by allowing Jesus to clean us—to forgive us, to love us. It starts by having a clean heart within. A clean heart always forgives and is able to see God in others and so love them. The Tongue, the part of our body that comes in such close contact with the Body of Christ, can become an instrument of Peace and Joy or of Sorrow and Pain. What do we want to use it for?

~ Mother Teresa's General Letter, December 14, 1973



MTI Reading Partnership with Holy Spirit Parish (Palmyra, PA) for *Come Be My Light*

The Mother Teresa Institute (MTI) introduced a “Reading Partnership” program this summer to encourage groups with their spiritual development and find inspiration from the life, work, and writings of Saint Teresa of Calcutta. While the program was developed for any interested organization, the first partnership was conducted with a group of parishioners from Holy Spirit Parish in Palmyra, Pennsylvania. The group selected *Come Be My Light*, edited by Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC (Director of the MTI) as the text they would follow for the summer program. Mr. Logan Zugay, the parish Confirmation PREP instructor, was identified as the coordinator and session leader. He then worked closely in collaboration with the MTI to design an agenda for the weekly sessions. Approximately seven parishioners from Holy Spirit parish met weekly throughout the summer, reading one or two chapters each week, to discuss their responses, lessons, and inspiration from each section of the reading. The group had varying levels of knowledge related to Mother Teresa, some members having watched her closely for several decades of her life and having previously read *Come Be My Light*, while others were born after her death or had never read any of her writings or books on her life.

The discussions among the group members each week illuminated various common themes that stood out for the participants, as well as individual lessons that various members found in the reading. Throughout the early chapters, the discussion highlighted a recognition of Mother Teresa’s leadership, humor, and simplicity. Several readers were struck by aspects of her biography related to her family, secret vow, and her remarkable obedience. There was particular emphasis on her humility and patience. These same themes of humility and simplicity remained present in the discussion as the group moved into the middle chapters of the text. There was great attention given to the many quotes and lessons that Mother Teresa offers through her directness and attention to what God wants. The most challenging aspect was Mother Teresa’s spiritual darkness and doubt, as some wondered what hope a normal person would have when someone so holy and devout as Mother Teresa could struggle so much. Nevertheless, her example of trust illustrated her value as a role model because of her humility and patience. Ultimately, the group came away with many lessons that were relatable and comforting, offering hope as they struggle with their own faith lives and a reminder to remain focused on the most important lesson that Jesus teaches us in Matthew 25:40, You did it to me.

This first iteration was a resounding success as the Holy Spirit Parish reading partnership group came away with a plan to participate again, with a shorter book during Lent or Advent and another text for the following summer. Fr. Brian, who was able to join the group via Zoom during one of the weekly sessions, commented that “I was impressed by the interest, insights and takeaways of the group members. This is another confirmation of why the Church gives us these spiritual heroes, the saints: to inspire us in our following of the Lord by their fidelity to their vocations.” The MTI was excited to share this experience with Holy Spirit Parish, and we invite other organizations to participate as a group in our reading partnership. This program intends to help the participants with their own spiritual development and inspiration to live out Jesus’s Gospel message of “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40) and to appreciate Mother Teresa’s response to Jesus saying, “I thirst” (Jn 19:28). The proposed model is for the group to meet weekly, or with a schedule to best suit the participants, and discuss key themes and lessons from the reading. Each group should have a dedicated coordinator/leader who works with the MTI facilitator to determine the schedule and appropriate book. Anyone with interest or questions should contact the MTI Research Fellow, Joe Evans at joseph@mtinstitute.org.



Mother Teresa Institute Quarterly Newsletter

October-December
2025

MTI Annual Keynote Lecture and Colloquium.

February 5-6, 2025

In celebration of St. Teresa of Calcutta's feast day, the Mother Teresa Institute (MTI) held its fourth annual keynote lecture and Colloquium at the Catholic University of America (CUA). The program began with an opening mass, celebrated by Fr. Darren Dentino, MC, in St. Paul Chapel (Caldwell Hall) before the start of a full day of academic discussion related to the theme of "Satiating Jesus' Thirst in the Darkness." Highlighted by a welcome address from the President of CUA, Dr. Peter Kilpatrick, and an introductory exposition from Cardinal Marc Ouellet, the Colloquium featured thought-provoking presentations from four eminent scholars who engaged in lively discussion with the audience. The celebration continued with Cardinal Ouellet presiding over Holy Mass in honor of St. Teresa's feast day on Saturday morning in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The discussion continued in Maloney Hall at CUA with the annual keynote lecture, "Lessons of Love," from Gen. (Ret.) Maryanne Miller, an insightful presentation on Mother Teresa's Relationship with Jesus by Leonora Tanushaj-O'Connell, a showing of the documentary film "Something Beautiful for God," and a closing panel session with the symposium speakers.

The Friday Colloquium, the academic portion of the program, was a full-day event held in the Happel Room in Caldwell Hall at CUA. After introductory comments from the director of the MTI, Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC, and CUA President Dr. Peter Kilpatrick, the day began with a theological examination of Mother Teresa's spirituality and its importance to the Church from Cardinal Ouellet. His Eminence highlighted that love was the "watchword" for her life and mission by framing his presentation with a foundation in Trinitarian theology to explore the spiritual thought of Adrienne von Speyr's understanding of the silence of Holy Saturday. He noted that St. Teresa of Calcutta teaches us how to see Jesus in the poor, demonstrating the opposite of the world's desire to shun all suffering, but to see it as a form of love. Following the Cardinal, Fr. Brian then gave his presentation "Mother Teresa: Witness to Hope in a Dark World" to explain that her painful inner experiences were vital to her mission. He drew from examples of St. Thérèse, John Paul II, and others to show Mother Teresa as a source of hope, especially for those suffering interior darkness. Fr. Darren Dentino, MC, then offered a presentation titled "*The Analogia Entis*: Preserving the Mystery of Jesus Hidden in the Poor" to explain how Mother Teresa shows how to become instruments in the hand of God. He frequently cited Mary as the paradigm for radiating Christ and allowing God to do His will through us, noting that three ways to do God's will is through accountability, asking Our Lady for her heart, and resisting an idea of freedom that is not rooted in God. The next presentation, by Dr. Bradley Gregory from CUA, returned to the scriptural roots of Mother Teresa's spirituality by exploring "Physical and Spiritual Thirst in Old Testament Theology." He noted that "thirst" symbolizes the wilderness, exile, and souls longing for salvation in the Old Testament, both physical and spiritual. The final presentation of the program, from Dr. Kevin Hughes – Chair of the Theology Department at Villanova University, was a comparison of the "Spiritual Darkness of Mother Teresa and St. Thérèse of Lisieux." He introduced the parallels and differences in the spiritual suffering of Mother Teresa and her patron saint, as well as with other examples, such as the "dark night of the soul" of St. John of the Cross. He noted that the indefiniteness of the darkness with Teresa and Thérèse is an opportunity to think about living within the darkness rather than trying to get past it. These presentations offered a comprehensive look at the nature and importance of quenching Jesus' thirst for love amid spiritual suffering and darkness.

The second day of the celebration began with nearly full-capacity attendance in the Crypt Church of the Basilica. Cardinal Ouellet offered an inspiring homily to celebrate the importance of St. Teresa of Calcutta in honor of her feast day. The program then began with a welcome from CUA President Dr. Peter Kilpatrick before we shifted to the presentations. The first speaker, Maryanne Miller – the first female four-star general in the U.S. Air Force, provided the keynote address by weaving personal anecdotes from her life, military career, and experience volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity (MC). She included lessons learned from the MC sisters, her own faith, and Mother Teresa, noting that the MCs taught her “how to live in the world, but not be of it,” while taking care to “accomplish small things with great love.” The next speaker, Leonora Tanushaj-O’Connell, spent eleven years as an MC Sister before going to Rome for higher education and co-founding a foundation to support individuals with addictions. She illuminated the audience from her own experience and perspectives on the “Hidden dynamics of Mother Teresa’s relationship with Jesus.” Her presentation highlighted how Mother Teresa showed us that the “interior must become the main power of the exterior” by recognizing that “only God’s love can cure loneliness.” She highlighted four pillars of Mother Teresa’s spiritual wealth by focusing on her love for souls, her vow to never refuse anything to God, her inspiration to quench the thirst of Jesus, and the long and painful years of darkness by putting love into action. The program concluded in the afternoon with a showing of Malcolm Muggeridge’s documentary “Something Beautiful for God” and then a panel discussion with Fr. Brian, Gen. Miller, and Leonora. The panelists responded to a variety of questions and comments from the audience related to Mother Teresa, her love for Our Lady, what Mother Teresa can teach us today, and other unique insights.

Ultimately, nearly one hundred and fifty participants joined in the two-day event, both in person and virtually. The combined experience of academic exploration, personal encounters and reflections, and the shared dialogue of all who attended help foster an environment of devotion to Mother Teresa on her feast day, while also helping the MTI to accomplish its goals of promoting and developing the authentic legacy of Saint Teresa of Calcutta and providing resources and insight to all who are interested in her life, charism, and message.



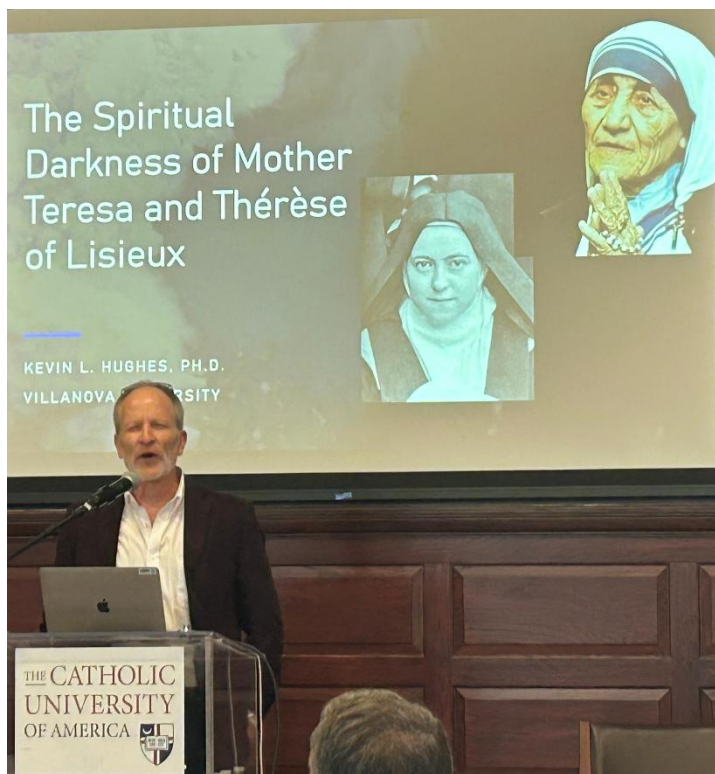
Leonora Tanushaj-O’Connell, Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC, and Gen Maryanne Miller speak at the annual MTI Symposium on September 6, 2025



Cardinal Marc Ouellet offers the homily at the Mass in celebration of Mother Teresa in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC on September 6, 2025



Leonora Tanushaj-O'Connell presents on her unique perspectives of Mother Teresa's relationship with Jesus at the MTI Symposium at the Catholic University of America on Saturday September 6, 2025



Dr. Kevin Hughes (Chair of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Villanova University) presents at the 4th Annual MTI Colloquium on Friday September 5, 2025



Group photo of members from the Holy Spirit Parish (Palmyra, PA) MTI Reading Partnership Group during a weekly session in July 2025



Mother Teresa Institute

2026 Student Research Symposium

Call for Papers

Date: Friday, April 24, 2026

Location: Mother Teresa Institute, Washington, DC

Deadline for Paper Submissions: Thursday, March 5, 2026

Event Description

The Mother Teresa Institute announces the first annual student symposium. Saint Teresa of Calcutta was an Albanian nun, originally a Sister of Loretto, who – after receiving a call from Jesus to serve the poorest of the poor – then founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, where she served the poor and marginalized for almost fifty years. The symposium aims to feature research from both undergraduate and graduate students related to the life, work, and writing of Mother Teresa. We encourage proposals from any discipline, department, and institution and welcome participation from students to this no-cost* symposium. The event will include a mentored pre-symposium workshop to facilitate interconnected panel discussions and presentation techniques. Students may utilize any writing (to include original research, course papers, journal articles, dissertation chapters, etc.) as the basis for their proposals.

This one-day hybrid (zoom and in-person) event is an opportunity for students from around the world to present and showcase their research related to the life, work, and impact of St. Teresa of Calcutta. The symposium will consist of a plenary session followed by panel presentations from the selected students. In each panel session, students will provide a fifteen-minute presentation on their respective research project. The symposium will conclude with a keynote presentation from the director of the Mother Teresa Institute.

Suggested Topic Areas (only suggestions, not exhaustive):

- Mother Teresa's Love of Jesus
- Mother Teresa's Spirituality
- Mother Teresa and Promoting Peace
- Missionaries of Charity Work with the Poor
- Mother Teresa's Marian Devotion
- Quenching Jesus's Thirst
- Suffering and Spiritual Darkness
- Understanding Mt. 25:40 "You Did it to Me"

Papers intended for consideration in this symposium should be 2000-8000 words. Selected students will be allocated 15 minutes for presenting their research as part of a panel with other student presenters.

** There is no registration fee for this symposium; however, attendees are responsible for their own transportation and lodging.*

Submission Information

Papers should be 2000-8000 words on a topic that is focused on or related to St. Teresa of Calcutta. All references should be cited using Chicago or APA style. No bibliography is required. Students name and institution must appear on the first page, above the title of the paper.

For questions, contact MTI@mtinstitute.org. Please submit your proposal by March 5, 2026

*** Link for submission can also be found at motherteresainstitute.org ***



Use QR Code or
[Link](#) to Submit