



Mother Teresa
Institute

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

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Mother Teresa Institute Quarterly Newsletter

July-September
2026

The spring and early summer for the Mother Teresa Institute (MTI) was highlighted with our first student research symposium. This event featured four students who presented summaries of research on St. Teresa of Calcutta that they completed during the previous academic year (more on this event can be found on pages 4-6 of the newsletter). Additionally, the MTI continued our preparation for a series of events coming up later this summer and throughout the fall. We also welcomed our new Executive Research Assistant, Clara Roberts, who began her tenure by visiting the Mother Teresa Center and Sisters in Tijuana, Mexico (more on her visit can be found on page 3). Ultimately, this visit, which also included the MTI research fellow Joe Evans, will help enhance collaboration and interoperability between the Center and the Institute. Other travel and projects include Fr. Brian's trip to Portugal and continued efforts to plan the annual Symposium and Colloquium and the 20th Century Saints project.

Upcoming 2026-2027 Events Schedule

JUN-AUG 2026	Summer Reading Partnership Program
SEP 4-5, 2026	Annual Colloquium & Keynote Lecture / Mother Teresa's Feast Day
NOV 12, 2026	Cardinal Ouellet Roundtable and Book Launch (Washington, DC)
DEC 2026	Advent Reading Partnership Program
JUN 26, 2027	20 th Century Saints Conference (Washington, DC)

Anyone with interest or questions about joining the reading partnership should contact the MTI Research Fellow, Joe Evans at joseph@mtinstitute.org.

Publication Review

Polo, Orlando, Sol Escobar, and Maria Vargas. "Central Banks: The Spiritual and Religious Legacy of Mother Teresa of Calcutta in Commemorative Coins." In *Pharos Journal of Theology*. Vol. 106 (4), 2025.

These authors analyze the link between theology, collective memory, and the symbolic representation of holiness through commemorative coins issued in remembrance of Mother Teresa. They examine how the coins disseminate spiritual, ethical and humanitarian values through an interdisciplinary approach that articulates symbolic theology, spiritual economy, and commemorative numismatics. The coins are seen as vehicles of silent evangelization and social pedagogy that preserve spiritual memory in public spaces and integrate the sacred into everyday life.

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

Words from Mother Teresa

Joy was the password of the first Christians. St. Paul—how often he repeats himself, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say to you, rejoice." In return for the great grace of Baptism the priest tells the newly baptized, "May you serve the Church joyfully."

Joy is not simply a matter of temperament. In the service of God and souls, it is always hard—all the more reason why we should try to acquire it and make it grow in our hearts.

~ Mother Teresa to the MC Sisters, April 3, 1964

Message from the Director

Mother Teresa was baptized the day after her birth on 26 August 1910. Because two other siblings had died as infants, her parents were eager to have their daughter baptized as soon as possible.

Baptism is primarily a gratuitous gift from God to the individual. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them” (Jn. 6:44). At Baptism, this supernatural life begins in the soul: together with sanctifying grace, the gifts of Faith, Hope, and Charity are infused into the soul. Faith enables one to believe in God; it ensures a life of grace on earth and gives the believer the possibility of attaining beatitude in heaven.

Although faith is a personal act, it is not an isolated one. The Catechism teaches that “It is through the Church that we receive faith and new life in Christ by Baptism” and “The believer [who] has received faith from others should hand it on to others.” These truths are evident in the life of Mother Teresa.

On 27 August 1910, Mother Teresa received the Sacrament of Baptism in Sacred Heart Church in Skopje. She expressed her gratitude for this gift by trying to live the Faith she received throughout her entire life. During the first year of preparation for the Great Jubilee, Mother Teresa wrote to the Sisters, “*So this year gives us the chance to come very close to our Crucified Spouse and, like Our Lady, to treasure and ponder in our hearts all that He has done for us and wants to give us – especially the gift of Faith and His own life in Baptism*” (MGL, 15 January 1997).

In November 1990, Mother wrote to the Sisters, expressing her appreciation for the gift of Baptism.¹ The same letter expressed her faith in ultimate union with God in heaven as the final purpose of human existence and her understanding of the Church’s role in transmitting this faith:

The month of November begins with two beautiful days: the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls. Holy Mother Church remembers all of her children, to whom She has given the life of Jesus through Baptism – and they are now either Home with Jesus in Heaven or waiting to go there through Purgatory. We all know that during this whole month we give them extra love and care, by praying to them and for them. We too must long for that beautiful day, when our turn will come, and we do not know the day or the hour.

A letter to Malcolm and Kitty Muggeridge reveals Mother Teresa’s deep insight into the mystery of God’s indwelling presence received at Baptism. However, she was also aware that God gives us the gifts of life and faith through human means, and for this reason she encouraged expressing gratitude to parents as His instruments.

Your new book ‘Why I am a Christian’ I am sure will become a means to deeper understanding of the indwelling of Christ - of Christ from the time of baptism - A Christian is a tabernacle of the living God - He created me - He chose me, He came to dwell in me - because He wanted me. . . . I think you should dedicate the book to your parents, who cooperated so beautifully with God in making you & bringing you to the altar of God for Baptism. Their cleaving to each other in the vine Christ has brought forth you, the fruit of their love for each other.

With St. Teresa, let us be grateful for the great gift of Baptism and for our parents, who cooperated with God to give us our human life and our supernatural life of grace through the precious sacrament of Baptism. May we all “long for that beautiful day when our turn will come” to go Home to God.

~ Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC

¹ MGL 223, 2 November 1990, in Mother Teresa, *Mother Teresa’s General Letters to Her Sisters*, edited by Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC, San Diego: Mother Teresa Center, 406.

Retreat in Fatima with MTI Director

From May 8–14, 2026, Fr. Brian accompanied three Missionaries of Charity Fathers on sabbatical to Fatima (Portugal) for a week of prayer, study, and renewal. The purpose of the visit was a focused seminar exploring the deep harmony between the message of Our Lady of Fatima and the spirituality of Mother Teresa. Each day combined time at the Shrine with presentations that highlighted how Mary’s call to conversion, prayer, and sacrifice finds concrete expression in Mother Teresa’s life of total surrender and service to the poorest, and therefore in the life of each Missionary of Charity. The Fathers approached the days with great openness, and Fatima provided the perfect setting for reflection, fraternity, and quiet encounters with grace. They visited all the places connected with the apparitions. This time together became not only an opportunity for learning but also a moment of spiritual refreshment, strengthening their vocations as Missionaries of Charity and renewing their devotion to Our Lady. It was a week when study became devotion, and Fatima itself became the classroom.



Photo Credits: Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC

MTI Visit to Mother Teresa Center - Tijuana

The MTI’s new Executive Research Assistant, Clara Roberts, began her work by visiting the sisters in Tijuana, MX, for three days in May 2026. Working closely with Sr. Ozana, she received an in-depth introduction to the Mother Teresa Center’s mission, its offshoot, the Mother Teresa Institute, and the Missionaries of Charity. Witnessing the sisters’ tender care for the men in their charge was a beautiful, first-hand introduction to the mission Our Lord called Mother Teresa to. The visit also provided an opportunity to become familiar with the extensive collection of Mother Teresa’s writings and to brainstorm updates and improvements for the MTI collection in Washington, D.C. Staying with the Sisters provided a peaceful atmosphere akin to a retreat and was an overall wonderful introduction to the work she will do here at the Mother Teresa Institute.



Photos from the Mother Teresa Center in Tijuana, Mexico.

Annual Gathering of the Mariological Society of America

The MTI research fellow, Dr. Joe Evans, participated in the annual gathering of the Mariological Society of America, which was held at Conception Abbey in Missouri from May 19-22, 2026. The theme of this program emphasized Papal Teachings on Mary since Pius IX. The final panel session of the gathering featured Samuel Kalu, a seminarian from the Archdiocese of Boston, who presented a paper titled "Mary and the Church of the Poor: Bridging Leo XIII's Marian Vision in *Magnae Dei Matris* with Leo XIV's Pastoral Call in *Dilexi Te*", which generated wide discussion on Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity. This paper will be expanded to include further reflection on this discussion and will be presented at our annual Colloquium in September.

MTI Student Research Symposium

The Mother Teresa Institute held its first student research symposium on Friday, June 26, 2026. The symposium featured presentations by four university students who joined from India, Africa, and the United States. The students included Fr. Francis Vishak Tak, from the Catholic diocese of Ajmer, Rajasthan, India, Fr. Darren Dentino, MC, who is currently the Novice Director for the MC priests and a doctoral student at the Catholic University of East Africa in Nairobi, Ermira Maria Henry, a recent graduate with a Masters degree from Central Michigan University, and Fr. Louis Mary Bethea, OP, a recent graduate of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC. Their research focused on the life, work, and writing of Mother Teresa. The purpose of this virtual event was to provide an opportunity for students at colleges and universities from around the world to present and showcase their research related to the life, work, and impact of St. Teresa of Calcutta. The symposium consisted of a series of presentations from the selected students. Each student gave a 15-minute presentation on their research project, followed by 15 additional minutes for questions and discussion. The symposium concluded with a reflection and response from Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, MC, the director of the Mother Teresa Institute. Fr. Brian particularly noted how the diversity of the presentations is an encouragement to the institute and this work "helps to show why Mother Teresa is a worthwhile subject of study." (The titles and abstracts of the presentations can be found on pages 5-6)



Photos of presenters at the MTI Student Research Symposium.

- Top Left: Fr. Darren Dentino, MC
- Top Center: Fr. Louis Mary Bethea, OP
- Top Right: Ermira Maria Henry
- Bottom Left: Fr. Francis Vishal Tak

(Photos derived from Zoom session screen shots)

Student Research Symposium Presentations

Fr. Francis Vishal Tak – St. Joseph’s Institute of Theology

“St. Teresa of Kolkata: Missionary, Mystic, Message”

Abstract: Our spirituality affects our lives. It gives us the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong, and we come to grips with the situation in a positive manner and progress on a path that leads to greater awareness and positivity. Every aspect of such spirituality is grounded in mysticism. The life of St. Teresa of Kolkata (hereafter Mother Teresa) is a befitting example of it, who dared to delve deeper into the mystery of the passion of Christ on Calvary and the same relived in the broken bodies of the poorest of the poor. In this same mystery the cry of Jesus, “I THIRST,” became her own so much so to enable her to realize the unquenchable thirst of the humanity to love and to be loved, wanted and cared for through her own mystical experiences, primarily the dark night of the soul she underwent for almost a half-century. Humanity has been blessed to have St. Teresa of Kolkata, who lived such experiences with a mystical-contemplative-missionary approach in the most dynamic way possible for a person she was. Therefore, I intend to write this thesis in response to the marginalization of her work to mere humanitarian welfare or one of the many Church ministries; enunciating her sanctity and greatness rooted in her mystical experiences. In this, I would also like to make a humble attempt to provide a wider horizon of understanding of the vast mystical-theological richness of her work grounded on these experiences.

Fr. Darren Dentino, MC – Catholic University of East Africa

“Rethinking Theological Anthropology through the Symbols of Nicaea: Developing the Cultural Narrative Medium for Interpreting and Inculturating Christian Mysteries in Africa”

Abstract: My dissertation investigates meaning-making understood as the elaboration of symbol through narrative, drawing principally on the hermeneutical insights of Paul Ricoeur. It argues that human beings come to understand themselves, their cultures, and ultimately God through narrative or stories, and that the fragmentation characteristic of contemporary technological culture – especially in the age of artificial intelligence – results largely from the loss of coherent narratives capable of orienting life toward transcendent meaning. The study contends that the principal rivals in this struggle for meaning are digital media and liturgy, each shaping habits of attention, imagination, and desire in profoundly different ways. Against this backdrop, it seeks to retrieve storytelling as a uniquely human and humanizing activity, finding its highest expression in the Church’s liturgical life as well as in the authentic development of Catholic doctrine across cultures and centuries, but that few people care about such things unless God’s love is revealed to them. This is where Balthasar’s famous thesis that *Love Alone is Credible* finds one of its most attractive witnesses in Mother Teresa. Drawing on more than thirty years of missionary experience, particularly in Africa, the dissertation examines the “conflict of interpretations” that arises when distinct cultural narratives encounter one another. Following Ricoeur, such conflicts are viewed not as obstacles but as opportunities for deeper self-understanding and openness to the “new possibilities of being” revealed in Christ and mediated by the Church. The Councils of Nicaea provide paradigmatic examples of authoritative ecclesial meaning-making which draws on cultural meanings while refining and transforming them, demonstrating how the Church interprets and radiates the mystery of Christ across time and culture. The privileged model of this narrative process of meaning making is the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose treasuring of and surrendering to God’s Word made her “something beautiful for God,” a vector of sanctification to others. At the Visitation, the Holy Spirit acted through her person not primarily through explanation but through radiance. Mother Teresa embodied this same Marian mode of evangelization, awakening wonder – “Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” [Lk 1:43] – rendering Christ both credible and desirable as Beauty. Drawing on Hans Urs von Balthasar’s theology of the mother’s smile, the dissertation concludes that evangelization bears fruit when the Church becomes “something beautiful for God”, awakening wonder, thanksgiving, and desire for God, inviting human stories to be integrated and fulfilled within Christ’s saving Story through faith, hope, and charity.

Ermira Maria Henry – Central Michigan University

“Quenching Jesus’s Thirst: Developing the Mother Teresa Human Services Program”

Abstract: Modern Human Services systems face escalating fragmentation, depersonalization, and practitioner burnout, revealing an urgent need for models that restore dignity, relational presence, and mission-aligned service. This capstone examines the Missionaries of Charity model founded by Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta as a framework for strengthening dignity-centered Human Services. Grounded in her conviction that “the greatest disease in the West today is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for,” the study explores how her spirituality of quenching Jesus’s thirst—expressed through radical compassion, simplicity, and person-to-person accompaniment—offers a transformative paradigm for contemporary organizational practice. Through a synthesis of quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and conceptual research, this project evaluates how organizational culture, values-driven leadership, multicultural competence, and spiritual formation influence organizational effectiveness. The analysis integrates scholarship on virtuous organizational cultures, human capital development, inclusive service delivery, and workplace spirituality to assess the relevance and applicability of Mother Teresa’s model within modern Human Services environments. A financial viability study further examines the feasibility of establishing a Mother Teresa Human Services Graduate Program designed to operationalize dignity-centered care. Findings indicate that dignity-centered organizational cultures enhance mission alignment, staff resilience, and client outcomes while addressing systemic challenges such as burnout and depersonalization. The study concludes with seven SMART-aligned recommendations and OKRs that translate Mother Teresa’s principles into actionable strategies for Human Services organizations seeking to cultivate compassion, strengthen practitioner well-being, and build sustainable, mission-driven systems capable of responding to the complex needs of today’s communities.

Fr. Louis Mary Bethea, O.P. – Dominican House of Studies

“I Thirst: A Thomistic Analysis of the Theology of St. Teresa of Calcutta”

Abstract: Love for God fueled everything that Mother Teresa did in her life. For Mother Teresa, this “way of love” points directly to Jesus Christ. Throughout the convents of the Missionaries of Charity, the utterance Christ made from the Cross, “I thirst” (Jn 19:28), is displayed to the left of every crucifix. This verse most succinctly summarizes her mystical experience of September 10, 1946, in which Christ asked her to slake his thirst for the souls of the poor. This *tesina* identifies and explicates Mother Teresa’s theology of thirst, a theology grounded in the scriptural text of Jn 19:28. From this analysis, Mother Teresa’s theology of thirst, as gleaned from Jn 19:28, will prove to offer tremendous depth to the traditional understanding of Christ’s thirst and augment the traditional understanding of this passage with a deep yearning that speaks directly to the love for mankind and desire that God has for the salvation of humanity. Thomas Aquinas will help us to see that God’s thirst is his love, and it is by means of his love (*érōs*) that man is drawn back to him and given the grace to yearn for God as his maker. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.” We will see just how Mother Teresa reckoned with and responded to Christ’s thirst and, in doing so, give a glimpse into the inner workings of her heart and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

MOTHER TERESA INSTITUTE ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

September 4-5, 2026

The Catholic University of America

Charity to the Poor Matthew 25:40

Join us in a solemn commemoration and celebration of the liturgical feast of St. Teresa of Calcutta for the fifth annual Mother Teresa Institute Colloquium and Symposium. This two-day event will feature a series of presentations that explore Mother Teresa's spirituality and life of service to the poor and marginalized.

General Schedule

Friday September 4

9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Caldwell Hall, CUA

Academic Sessions

Introductory presentation by Bishop Bryan Bayda, Eparch of Toronto, and other presentations related to Matthew 25:40 "You Did It to Me" and Mother Teresa's ministry to the poor.

Saturday September 5

9:00 am: Holy Mass in Crypt Church, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Celebrant: Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia (Apostolic Nuncio)

10:30 am – 4:00 pm

Hannan Hall 108, CUA

Presentations on Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity, showing of documentary film, and discussion groups.



For more information, please contact the Mother Teresa Institute at mti@mtinstitute.org