

Ministries Fulfilled in India

By JOAN M. SMITH

Mother Teresa of Calcutta's influence has touched millions of people and has changed the lives of many; among them, Martha Thompson and Father William Frankhauser, SJ.

Following Mother's call for "unselfish giving of oneself" led Martha, a Cardinal Mooney graduate, to a clinic run by Mother's Missionaries of Charity in West Bengal — it took McQuaid's Father Frankhauser to many places including the poorest section of Calcutta where three million Pakistani refugees settled during the Partition.

The change in Martha's life came in her freshman year at the University of Toronto where she heard Mother Teresa speak. She decided to devote a year of her time to serving with Mother's missionaries and cancelled her plans to enter the University of Edinburgh. After first serving an apprenticeship with Mother's order in London, Martha embarked in November 1976 for Nirmala Kennedy Centre which is outside of Calcutta. It was there among the Indian poor, struggling with poverty, malnutrition and disease that Martha witnessed the force which is Mother Teresa.

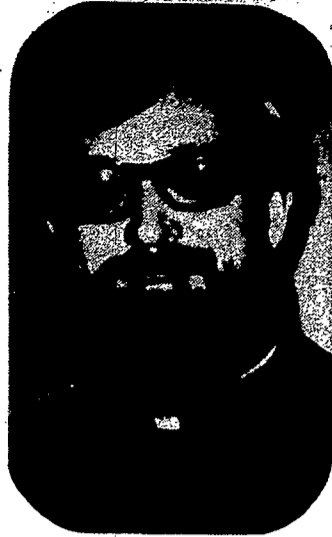
"To live and work with Mother," she said, "is to see little miracles every day." According to Martha she is held in great reverence by the people no matter what their religion. "The Hindus," she said, "think she is the reincarnation of one of their goddesses." Martha told of Mother's complete trust that the Lord would take care of all necessities: "She derives her faith from God," she declared and noted that all who work in her service come to rely on the sustenance of prayer because "of being assaulted from all sides with so much suffering and pain."

At the center Martha's



Chest Officers

Alfred J. Murrer, president and chief executive officer of Gleason Works, has been re-elected president of the United Community Chest of Rochester. Re-elected as vice presidents are Eugene C. Dorsey, publisher of Gannett Rochester Newspapers; Ernest L. Reveal, president and chief executive officer of R.T. French Co.; William G. von Berg, president and chief executive officer of Sybron Corp. Natacha P. Dykman, vice president of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council, and J. Richard Everett, patent attorney at Kodak, were also elected vice Presidents. Sue S. Stern of Nixon, Hargrave, Devans and Doule, will be secretary, and William L. Sutton, M.D., of Kodak, treasurer.



FATHER FRANKHAUSER



MARTHA THOMPSON

tasks included bathing, feeding, teaching and administering medicine to the children. She also kept the compound's records; a depressing job because it attested to the everyday occurrence of thousands of children being abandoned in the railroad stations.

If it is possible to pick one area in this country over another population, which is overflowing with humanity, it is Calcutta. Martha described the city as "a carpet of people" and its condition is continually being added to by people who flock to the city from other troubled parts of India. They set up housekeeping in the railroad and bus stations, in the streets and alleyways, staying there until they are engulfed by the Monsoons.

Besides her devoting her time and energies to the Missionaries, Martha was also instrumental in obtaining funds for the Clinic from the Rochester Diocesan Peace and Justice Commission. It was in her report to the Commission that Martha best described the plight of India. "This is a place where people are really starving when they come for food, are really dying when they come to our dispensary and are really hopeless when they give us children they can no longer care for."

Father Frankhauser found himself serving in India after talking with Mother Teresa who invited, "If you have the opportunity to come and the opportunity presented itself last summer."

Father, besides teaching Latin at McQuaid, is involved in the L'Arche program which ministers to the mentally handicapped in a home environment. It is a world-wide organization and he went to visit and work in the L'Arche communities in India.

His first stop was Calcutta where he lived in the shadow of the House of the Dying and the leper clinics. "It was like getting into a time machine and going back to ancient civilization," he said of the cultural shock that is India; a land where superstition abounds and disease is nourished. Father explained the nourishing of diseases in light of the fact that begging (a national profession) is open only to the physically infirm. And since, in most instances, it is the only

means of surviving he told of a certain caste of people who maim their babies to assure them a begger's life.

Father visited the leper colonies where he not only said Mass but bathed the diseased. With quiet honesty, he admitted to having a sense of repulsion. "I didn't know what I was doing there until I realized what presence means to them."

It was there, that he also discovered the people's simple openness and tremendous sense of giving. He recounted how while they stood in the blazing sun, waiting for medication, they held an umbrella over his head, even though they were in extreme pain.

In visiting the L'Arche communes, Father journeyed to Kottiyakum, Bangalore, Kerala and throughout his travels witnessed the people's deep

sense of spirituality regardless of their religion. He also observed the dignity of the people without jobs and also the inherent mistrust of the government. But it was the appalling illiteracy which makes him adamant in his opinion that it is this problem which is holding India back.

He like Martha was overwhelmed by the masses of humanity. "They hang out of the trams like grapes on a vine," he said. And if overpopulation, poverty, disease and hunger weren't enough, the people have to contend with voracious monkeys and crows. Father told of being shown through a mango grove when the people became highly agitated over an intruding monkey. Father was puzzled about the excited reaction until a few minutes later he saw hundreds of these beasts sweep through the grove, stripping it of everything eatable. The crows, he noted, content themselves with the papaya groves.

Both missionaries are home now. Martha is back at the University of Toronto where she has switched to the School of Medicine with the hopes of returning to India armed with the medical knowledge they desperately need. Father is back teaching Latin and devoting his energies to the L'Arche program. They are witnesses to the impact Mother Teresa has had with her tireless efforts in working with the poorest of the poor, making them feel human.

"She has a deep belief in

people," declared Father. "Perhaps it is this belief that will someday balance the scales for India."

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