



Mother Teresa

Reuters/CNS

## Witness speaks for cause

CALCUTTA, India (CNS) — An 80-year-old Jesuit suffering from cancer who testified about Mother Teresa's life said canonization is needless because everyone knew she was holy.

Jesuit Father Joseph Cukale, a native of Croatia, was interviewed three times July 28 by the diocesan inquiry team researching Mother Teresa's life for canonization. UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Thailand, said each session lasted almost an hour. Father Cukale knew Mother Teresa for 30 years.

The priest, who lives in a Jesuit infirmary in Calcutta, said later that the long canonization process is needless because "everyone knows that Mother was holy. Still, the rules of the church have to be followed."

Father Cukale came to Calcutta in 1950, the same year that Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity received papal approval, and lived in the city most of his life. He said he could not find "any shortcoming" in the nun.

Mother Teresa came to the city in 1929 as a 19-year-old Loreto novice and lived in Calcutta until her death Sept. 5, 1997, at age 87. She was buried inside the Missionaries of Charity motherhouse.

Through her works of mercy and her love for the poor, Mother Teresa "discovered the city, and in doing so she discovered the world," said Father Cukale, who was a Missionaries of Charity chaplain in Russia for more than a year.

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## Visions and the church

"It is generally seen as very bad news for officialdom when it is reported that Our Lady has appeared to someone," Father Benedict J. Groeschel, CFR, observed in his 1994 book *A Still Small Voice - A Practical Guide On Reported Revelations*.

Catholic officials must be extremely careful assessing apparitions, explained the priest, who is also a psychologist and spiritual director. Thus, few more than a handful of private revelations — including the events surrounding Mary's appearances at Lourdes and Guadalupe — have been approved for devotion.

Private revelations are visions or messages that the receiver believes came from a heavenly source — Jesus, Mary, the saints or angels. Private revelations run the gamut from apparitions (supernatural manifestations) to locutions (messages perceived in the recipient's mind). Private revelations pose significant challenges to church authority, according to Father Groeschel. In assessing some cases, officials may be berated by believers for acting too slowly, he wrote. In other cases, assessed more swiftly and without thorough investigation, officials can unwittingly authenticate frauds.



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