

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 59

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 134

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 59—Relative to Mother Teresa.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 23, 1997.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 59, Solis. Relative to Mother Teresa.

This measure would honor the memory of Mother Teresa, and would encourage the people of California to reflect upon her integrity, her humility, and her philanthropy.

WHEREAS, Mother Teresa was born Agnes Ganxha Bojaxhiu on August 26, 1910, in Skopje, in what is now the Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia; and

WHEREAS, As a public school student, she was a member of a Catholic sodality with a special interest in foreign missions, and later stated, "At the age of 12, I first knew I had a vocation to help the poor. I wanted to be a missionary"; and

WHEREAS, At 18, having previously been inspired by the work of Yugoslavian Jesuit missionaries in Bengal, she left home to join the Irish branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Loreto Sisters, making her first vows as a nun in 1928, and her final vows in 1937; and

WHEREAS, While teaching and serving as principal at Loreto House, a fashionable girls' college in Calcutta, she became depressed by the destitution, homelessness, and sickness on the city streets; and

WHEREAS, In 1946, she received what she termed a "call within a call" to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them, and 2 years later received permission from the Vatican to leave the Loreto Sisters to follow this new calling, under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Calcutta; and

WHEREAS, After 3 months of medical training, under the American Medical Missionary Sisters of Patna, India, Mother Teresa went into the slums of Calcutta and brought back children who had been cut off from education to her first school; and

WHEREAS, In 1950, the Missionaries of Charity became a diocesan religious community, and 15 years later was recognized by the Vatican as a pontifical congregation, directly under Vatican jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, As of 1995, the Missionaries of Charity had approximately 4,500 professed sisters in about 550 convents in 126 countries; and

WHEREAS, The vows of poverty taken by the members of the Missionaries of Charity are stricter than those taken by members of other congregations, because, in the words of Mother Teresa, “to be able to love the poor and know poor, we must be poor ourselves”; and

WHEREAS, In addition to their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Missionaries of Charity also take a vow of “wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor”, meaning that they can neither work for the rich, nor accept any money for their work, and Mother Teresa believed that if the missionaries continued to do God’s work, God would continue to provide the financial means; and

WHEREAS, The work of Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity were not widely known until 1968, when noted British journalist and television personality Malcolm Muggeridge produced the documentary, “Something Beautiful for God”, followed in 1971 by a book of the same name; and

WHEREAS, Since that time, Mother Teresa’s name often appeared high on lists of the world’s most admired women, she was acclaimed by many as a living saint, and she received numerous awards and honors for her service to humanity, including the Congressional Gold Medal on June 5 of this year, the first Pope John XXIII Peace Prize in 1971, the 1976 Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, which she accepted “in the name of the hungry, of the naked, of the homeless, of the blind, of the lepers, of all those who feel unwanted, unloved, and uncared for throughout society”; and

WHEREAS, Mother Teresa founded houses in Cuba and the Soviet Union, a notable accomplishment, in that these countries were not generally open to foreign church workers; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, Mother Teresa began working with sufferers of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and opened AIDS shelters in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Mother Teresa, who lived and preached the motto, “Do small things with great love”, died in Calcutta, India, on September 5, 1997, at age 87; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature honors the memory of Mother Teresa, and encourages the people of California to reflect upon her integrity, her humility, and her philanthropy.

