

# Mother Teresa to be sainted after Francis recognises miracle

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Pope Francis has cleared the way for sainthood by approving a decree recognising a second miracle attributed to her intercession with God which is a necessary event for such a move in the church.

Teresa, who died in 1997 at the age of 87, became an international icon of charity in the 20th century but has also been criticised for trying to convert people to Christianity. She was beatified in 2003 by the late Pope John Paul II. Beatification, which requires one miracle, is the last step before sainthood, which requires two. The Church believes saints are holy men and women who lived extraordinary lives of virtue and are believed to be in Heaven with God.

Francis, who has made concern for the poor a major plank of his papacy, was keen to make Mother Teresa a saint during the Church's current Holy Year, or Jubilee, in which Catholics are called on to emphasise the need for mercy and compassion in the world.

Teresa's second miracle involved the inexplicable healing of a Brazilian man who was suffering from a viral brain infection that resulted in multiple abscesses with hydrocephalus, according to Church officials.

Relatives prayed to Teresa and he recovered, leaving doctors at a loss to explain how. A Vatican medical commission deemed the recovery "inexplicable in the light of present-day medical knowledge", according to Fr Brian Kolodiejchuk, chief promoter of Teresa's cause.

In Calcutta, Sunita Kumar, spokeswoman for Teresa's Missionaries of Charity religious order, said the nuns were "over the moon" at the news.

"We thought her whole life was a miracle," she said. "Her whole life was dedicated to the poor and there was nothing else in her mind than service. Everyone was accepted and there was no obstruction in her work."

In the years since her death, some critics accused Teresa and the order of having ulterior motives, saying their real aim was to convert people to Christianity. The order has denied the allegations, saying, for example, that most of those helped in the Kalighat Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta were non-Christians with just a few days left to live.

Known as the "saint of the gutters", the diminutive nun is expected to be canonised — formally made a saint — in early September. It was not clear if the ceremony would take place in Rome...