

# THE MODERN WORLD

**The Medallion** is the papal tiara and the crossed keys, signifying Papal authority over the universal Catholic church.

**Mother Teresa of Calcutta** (1910–1997) is distinguished by her service to the poorest of the poor. While a member of the Sisters of Loreto and teaching middle class girls in India, she experienced a call to the slums of Calcutta. She founded the Missionaries of Charity to serve the destitute and dying. In 1979, she received the Nobel Peace Prize and also India's highest civilian honor. She remained in her work until her death. Now, thousands of her order continue her work worldwide. She was beatified in 2003 by Pope John Paul II.

**Pope John XXIII** (1881–1963), born to a peasant family in Italy, was elected pope in 1958. He convened the Second Vatican Council, saying it was time to open the windows of the Church and let in some fresh air. His episcopal motto was "Obedience and Peace." During WWII, he smuggled Jews out of Nazi-occupied Europe to escape the death camps. He was beatified in 2000. His body was found to be uncorrupted upon opening his tomb.

**Pope John Paul II** (1920–2005) was the first non-Italian pope since 1520, and the longest reigning in 1000 years. He studied for the priesthood clandestinely in Nazi-occupied Poland and served as a priest and bishop in Communist Poland. He had a deep understanding of human oppression. In 1983, after a failed assassination attempt in 1981, he forgave his assailant Ali Aga. In 2000, he asked forgiveness for the Church's past sins. Many people call him "John Paul the Great."

**Martin Luther King Jr.** (1929–1968) led the non-violent struggle for civil and human rights for African Americans and is known as the "Apostle of Freedom." He was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis TN where he had gone to support a garbage workers' strike. While he was not a Catholic, he was a prophetic Christian and witness for the gospel.

**Edith Stein** (1891–1942) was raised a secular Jew. She became an atheist. After inspiration from the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, she became a Carmelite nun. She became the leading Catholic feminist in Europe. She and her sister were murdered as Jews at Auschwitz.

**Maximilian Kolbe** (1894–1941) (August 14), a Polish priest, was canonized in 1982 in the presence of the man whose life he saved by substituting for him in an Auschwitz starvation punishment. During WWII he provided shelter to refugees, including 2,000 whom he hid in a friary. As an amateur radio operator, he broadcast anti-Nazi reports. He was arrested and sent to Auschwitz in 1941.

**Thomas Merton, OSB** (1915–1968), a convert to Catholicism, wrote some of the most widely read spiritual books of the 20th century. *Seven Storey Mountain* brought many people to the Catholic Church. He became a conscience for the Church on the issue of peace and influenced a whole generation of pacifists. He was a close friend of Dorothy Day.

