

MOTHER TERESA EARNED SAINTHOOD

The following article written by Bill Donohue was recently published by CNSNews.com.

On September 4, Blessed Mother Teresa will forever be known as Saint Mother Teresa. I know of no one in my lifetime, save for Saint John Paul II, who could rival her qualifications for canonization.

If ever there were an altruist, it was Mother Teresa. She selflessly gave of herself for decades, helping the sick and dying, picking them up off the street, securing medicinal care, and comforting them in their closing days. And she never asked for anything in return.

Those she ministered to were the most destitute of the destitute: children who survived abortions, the malnourished, lepers, AIDS patients, the physically and mentally handicapped, elderly cripples—she never turned anyone away. Indeed, she implored those who would abandon the dispossessed—this included hospitals—to “give them to me.”

Given all of this, she still had her detractors. That is why I wrote, *Unmasking Mother Teresa’s Critics* (Sophia Institute Press).

There are two principal characteristics that mark every one of Mother Teresa’s biggest critics: their militant atheism and their support for socialism, or left-wing politics.

It is entirely possible to be an atheist and be a fan of Mother Teresa, and I name them. It is also possible to be a socialist and admire her work; I name them, too. But when these two attributes are combined, those who harbor them are more likely to be her enemy. This is certainly true of the

most extremist in their ranks.

Militant atheists, by definition, are predisposed not to embrace religious figures, especially Catholic titans. What is perhaps not as self-evident is why radical socialists might find Mother Teresa distasteful.

Radical socialists believe that it is the job of the state, and the state alone, to tend to the poor. As such, any private, voluntary effort to help the needy is viewed as a deterrent to the role of the state. When the source of assistance is faith-based, that is even more alarming.

Militant atheists and radical socialists, beginning with Christopher Hitchens, have always hated Mother Teresa because she is an altruist. In their minds, there is no such thing as altruism. Why? Because historically altruists have been religiously inspired champions of the poor and the neglected. Think of it: Who is the secular analogue to Mother Teresa?

Samuel and Pearl Oliner are non-observant Jewish sociologists who wrote *The Altruistic Personality*. They wanted to know who were the most likely to risk their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, and what they found were characteristics more closely aligned with people of faith than atheists. These altruists were not the kinds of people that would endear themselves to the likes of Hitchens.

In other words, Mother Teresa represented a threat. She was a threat to the worldview that holds that religion is inimical to freedom, and faith-based programs for the poor are an obstacle to statist prescriptions. Indeed, she represented a target that was so rich, so big, it was irresistible.

In my book, I take on every major criticism made against her. And unlike Hitchens, who wrote a book that had not one citation—no footnotes, no endnotes—my volume has more footnotes than pages. I am not a fan of unsupported opinions, especially when the subject is the debunking of someone the

stature of Mother Teresa. Put up or shut up.

The critics of Mother Teresa, and there are many more than Hitchens, have an agenda: to take her down. They failed. I, too, have an agenda: to defend her. After writing my book, I can honestly say that I love her now more than ever. She made my job easy—there is so much to love.