

MOTHER TERESA HONOR DENIED; PETITION DRIVE BEGINS

The Catholic League has begun a worldwide campaign protesting a decision by officials from the Empire State Building to deny Mother Teresa the same honor it has extended to virtually every world leader, event or holiday, namely, to shine the colors associated with the honoree from its tower on a designated night.

On August 26, the U.S. Postal Service is honoring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mother Teresa. On February 2, Bill Donohue submitted an application to the Empire State Building Lighting Partners requesting that the tower lights feature blue and white, the colors of Mother Teresa's congregation, the Missionaries of Charity, on August 26. On May 5, the request was denied without explanation.

Mother Teresa received 124 awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Medal of Freedom. She built hundreds of orphanages, hospitals, hospices, health clinics, homeless shelters, youth shelters and soup kitchens all over the world, and is revered in India for her work. She created the first hospice in Greenwich Village for AIDS patients. Not surprisingly, she was voted the most admired woman in the world three years in a row in the mid-1990s. But she is not good enough to be honored by the Empire State Building.

Last year the Empire State Building shone in red and yellow lights to honor the 60th anniversary of the Chinese Communist revolution. Yet under its founder, Mao Zedong, the Communists killed 77 million people. In other words, the greatest mass murderer in history merited the same tribute being denied to Mother Teresa.

We have launched a worldwide petition drive protesting this indefensible decision. We are petitioning Anthony Malkin, the owner of the Empire State Building, to reverse the decision. Members are urged to write to him at Malkin Properties, One Grand Central Place 60, E. 42nd St., New York, New York 10165.

Every reporter who has contacted Malkin's office has been hung up on. A public relations representative hired from another firm would only say that he has been instructed not to say anything. Furthermore, when reporters from CBS sought access to Malkin on May 14, security guards escorted them out of his building.

We have started a worldwide letter-writing campaign contacting key religious and secular leaders; it will continue over the summer. On August 26, we will hold a street demonstration protesting this obscene decision to stiff Mother Teresa. We urge all members to be there, if they can.