

Mundo Cristiano (October, 1997)

In its October 1997 issue, the magazine Mundo Cristiano (Madrid) published an article by Bishop Javier Echevarría in memory of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, entitled "The face of God's mercy".

The prophet Elijah once had to flee for his life and sought refuge in the desert. Exhausted, he sat down under a tree "and he asked that he might die." But God had other plans. An angel touched Elijah and, showing him a loaf of bread and a glass of water, said to him: "Arise and eat." The prophet "arose and ate and drank and went in the strength of that food . . . to Horeb the mount of God" (1 *Kings* 19:1-8).

There are still deserts on the face of the earth, and there are still men and women who lose all hope and "ask that they might die." The long list of misfortunes and accidents that can lead to a loss of hope has been recalled all too often. However, the death of Mother Teresa has shown us the other side of the coin—the face of God's mercy.

Mother Teresa told anyone willing to listen that she was trying to bring a small portion of love to the least fortunate on earth, to bring a healing touch to their painful memories and remind them that God loves them. Her message was always that God, the Creator of the world and the entire universe, re-

members the name of each of us as though we were his only child.

But let us return to the Book of Kings. After the angel consoled Elijah, God told the prophet to climb a mountain because the Lord was going to pass by. Elijah, after doing so, waited there with great anticipation. First a "strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks . . . but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle" because God was passing by. God was in the still small voice. God, rich in mercy, does not speak with power, but with words spoken so quietly that they can only be heard with the heart.

Also in the twentieth century God has sent consoling angels, who speak in whispers in the ears of each person and point out the bright path to heaven, the path of merciful Love.

This whisper of love reaches our hearts as a demanding call: "deeds are love, and not sweet words." Those of us whom God has asked to remain in the world and sanctify it from within find it very easy to praise and pray for a work as beneficial to the Church as that of Mother Teresa and her congregation, which is another way of being the Church.

✠Bishop Javier Echevarría
Prelate of Opus Dei