

Donna - Marie Cooper O'Boyle



"The absolute essence of my work is to inspire, to teach, to encourage, and to help others discover their God-given gifts," says the Connecticut-based mother of five and grandmother. Her ten year-long, close bond with Mother Teresa (detailed in her National Press Women award-winning book *Mother Teresa and Me: Ten Years of Friendship* and her memoir *The Kiss of Jesus*) has imbued her with an approach that profoundly resonates with many dimensions of society, chiefly because of the attitude of service, humility and self-respect that she promotes in all of her work. "I am hardly a self-appointed leader who promises instant prosperity, perfect make-up or an easy way out," she says with her trademark deadpan sense of humor. "I have never set myself up to be anything more than a work in progress. I'll be the first to admit that my house will probably never be aesthetically correct and at times there may be a few dishes in my kitchen sink. But, I am not going to worry about it! Though I want a clean and organized home, people come first in my life. In addition, I endeavor to help others see that they are a work in progress as well, and they shouldn't be too hard on themselves though we all need to strive for holiness within the nitty-gritty details of our lives. Mother Teresa has taught us that, 'Holiness is not the luxury of a few but a simple duty for you and me.'"

A single mother herself for many years, Donna-Marie lives and teaches the lessons passed down to her by her mentor Mother Teresa: a simple doctrine of love, kindness, non-judgment and support for those who need help, encouragement, affirmation and healing. "Calcutta is all over the world for those who have eyes to see," she asserts. "We don't have to traipse off to Calcutta to find the poor or those who need our help. They are right here in our own neighborhoods and communities—they are right within our own homes!" Donna-Marie's conviction that nothing should stand in the way of our commitment to one another or false ideas about the meaning of social class, wealth or fame also rings true. "Another kind of poverty exists in our affluent areas," she says. "People are starving for love! They might look all put together but inside they are crying—they are starving for the tenderness and warmth of a human touch. We must find Calcutta in our own midst and reach out to those who are in need. As Mother Teresa was famous for saying, 'Love begins at home.' I believe we should begin there and if we are called to broaden our reach, we need to do so. Calcutta is right here, right now. Let's not miss the opportunity to help transform lives with God's grace."

This fearless woman's down-home message is crystal clear, especially when it comes to women and the demands for perfection they face, in the workplace, at home, even in the parish. "What the heck is a 'size zero' anyway? There is no such thing as a size zero!" she exclaims. "Women should not be literally killing themselves trying to achieve some kind of unobtainable level of perfection, chasing after an airbrushed or impossible image. It will not bring them happiness!" The counsel she brings to women's groups and through her media appearances is centered on countering the barrage of crazy mixed messages aimed at women, which dictate to them that they should be more like a man to get ahead in the world. "Women will become healed of their inner wounds and confusion about their identities if they stop to assess their God-given gifts and special nature and pray" she advises. "Pressure from a culture which undermines a woman's expression of femininity should have no place in a real woman's life."

In all of her work, Donna-Marie emphasizes the importance of every single woman as a spiritual mother, whether they have biological children and traditional family units, or not. "We all have been given gifts from God to serve others. We all, in a sense, "mother" others. That is the great God-given gift of womanhood, in every stage, phase or path in life," she concludes.

Her view on prayer may have some traditionalists shaken up, but Donna-Marie's way is changing the lives who have lost touch with who they are and who they are called to be. "People can get intimidated and scared to begin or re-enter that vital prayer relationship with God because of 'holier-than-thou' messages they are sensing," says Donna-Marie. "I say: start right now, wherever you are! It's never too late to start praying and developing a loving relationship with your Creator. Speak from your heart and you will be heard. God always listens." Her take on suffering and how we can allow it to heal us rather than make us bitter is also a huge part of her work, and both fascinates and changes those who read her books. "Suffering is part of life. We all encounter it in a variety of ways. We cannot come to terms with suffering in our life until we learn to surrender our lives fully and wholeheartedly to God," she states. In addition, Donna-Marie tries to emphasize the absolute need for forgiveness and explains how it can be done and how it frees us from smothering chains of bondage to the pain and suffering. She includes this message in many of her books.

Growing up in a large, close-knit Catholic family, Donna-Marie rolled up her sleeves from a young age, helping with the care of the animals on her small family farm, even delivering fresh chicken eggs on horseback. "We weren't well off and we struggled financially," she recalls. "My parents were hard workers. I saw two brothers go off to the Vietnam War and heartily counted my blessings when they both came back alive. I am all too familiar with the ways of the world, our darkened culture and the importance of committing to raising one's children in faith so they can navigate their way on the straight path, protecting them from the dangers of the world."

In her desire to help lead others closer to God, a teacher at heart, Donna-Marie likes to place Church teaching at their fingertips and always weaves the teachings of the Catholic Church throughout her writings and talks by quoting pertinent verses from the Catholic Catechism and from the lives of the Saints.

Perhaps a telling example of Donna-Marie's heart and vocation is expressed in a certain true story she holds dear. "I was reaching out to a frightened young woman on a plane from Rome, Italy to the New York when we were going through turbulence," she recalls. "An elderly man who was seated a few rows back leaned toward me and asked how I did that. He seemed surprised that one would reach out to a complete stranger that way. I replied, 'I guess God has put a lot of love in my heart. I like to help people.' It was the only way I could explain it at that moment. The man seemed visibly impacted by that simple statement and that gesture of love. Love is powerful. My strong belief is that God works through every situation, allowing us to be His humble instrument of love and peace. To be fully realized and exceptional as people, we need to let Him do so. I believe that every situation—both joyful and challenging, presents a marvelous opportunity for God's grace to come through. It all depends upon our responses to the situations. If we respond selflessly and with love, amazing things can happen—miracles occur before our eyes. And they do—always with God's amazing grace."

In addition to her vocation as a mother and grandmother, Donna-Marie has been a Catechist for almost thirty years at her parish and an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist to the sick and to her parish. Donna-Marie was invited by Cardinal Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity to participate in an International Congress for women at the Vatican to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem: On the Dignity and Vocation of Women* penned by Pope John Paul II. Following in the footsteps of Mother Teresa, Donna-Marie founded a branch of the lay Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's Order) and is passionate about encouraging others to follow in Mother Teresa's footsteps, caring for the poorest of the poor. Donna-Marie also created and heads "Friends of Veronica," an outreach to the seniors, the sick, and the lonely in nursing homes and hospitals.

Donna-Marie Cooper O' Boyle is a frequent guest on EWTN television and radio. Donna-Marie is the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN) host and creator of three popular television series: *Everyday Blessings for Catholic Moms*, *Catholic Mom's Café*, and *Feeding Your Family's Soul*. EWTN is the largest religious media network in the world with 11 networks broadcast in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week to over 268 million television households in more than 145 countries and territories.

Doug Keck, EWTN's COO and Host of EWTN's *Bookmark* shared, "Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle has the great ability to speak to and spiritually connect with the hearts of her readers."

In addition to her own television shows, Donna-Marie has appeared on Fox News, EWTN News Nightly, Zenit News, Vatican Insider, Rome Reports, EWTN LIVE, *At Home with Jim and Joy*, *The Journey Home* (with Marcus Grodi), *The Choice We Face* (with Ralph Martin), and Vatican Radio. And she is a frequent guest on EWTN's *Bookmark* (with Doug Keck), *Women of Grace* (with Johnnette Williams), *Sunday Night Prime* (with Fr. Benedict Groesbeck, CFR and Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR), and on national radio and television.

Donna-Marie is a regular contributor to a wide range of newspapers, magazines, TV and online media outlets worldwide, interviewing everyone from Cardinals and fashion moguls to movie stars. She thoroughly enjoys leading others on pilgrimages to Shrines and holy places on the pilgrimages that she plans. You can learn more about them on her ["pilgrimage" page](#) on her website.

She's also an award-winning journalist and writes on a variety of subjects in national and international media, including: L'Osservatore Romano (English edition), the National Catholic Register, Magnificat magazine, Catholic World Report, Marian Helper magazine, and Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly and others. Donna-Marie is also a General Editor for the Divine Mercy Catholic Bible and has written two major Divine Mercy articles for this Bible. She also writes books on Divine Mercy and is an authority on the life of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska.

As an international speaker, Donna-Marie often gives keynote speeches to large women's conferences, as well as presents to military women on bases and at their worldwide forums. She also gives headliner speeches around the world (with her largest audience to date at 20,000). She is just as happy presenting at small intimate gatherings and believes that God is present in the details of EVERYTHING!

Aside from her work as a writer and speaker, Donna-Marie is firmly grounded in reality. Her daily interests and commitments include extensive organic gardening, photography, hiking, and healthy cooking. She also has her hand in creative design of all kinds. She thoroughly enjoys spending as much time as possible with her children and grandchildren.