



Hope Endures

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Colette **Livermore**

William Heinemann, \$34.95

There are many memoirs of growing up Catholic in Australia and equally many by people who chose the religious life, then abandoned it. The edge that author Colette Livermore has here is that her vocation led her to Mother Teresa of Calcutta's Missionaries of Charity.

Where other orders abandoned medieval Catholicism after Vatican II, the Sainted Mother retained its most authoritarian aspects. At the same time, her sisters were thrust into the most confronting of situations, extreme Third World poverty.

Faith and a rule of unquestioning obedience could be of no solace, as Livermore discovered. She was keen, practical, but vulnerable: her father had abandoned the family.

The order seemed to fulfil her need to help others, but it proved blinkered by its religious extremes. In addition, the rule of obedience created petty, poisonous tyranny among the sisters.

Hope Endures could be read alongside Christopher Hitchens' denunciations of Mother Teresa. It is more moderate in its criticisms, but equally devastating. Livermore quietly shows how the rule of Mother Teresa could destroy lives. It caused her to leave the order, Catholicism and any semblance of faith.