



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 16, 2012

Congressmen Nominate Compassionate Coptic Missionary for Nobel Peace Prize

Among the more notorious parties honored in the past few years for their efforts in the name of “peace” have been such international luminaries as Al Gore, Jimmy Carter, Kofi Annan, Yasser Arafat, Henry Kissinger, the entire United Nations organization — and, perhaps most gallingly for the average American, Barack Obama, who not only continued George W. Bush’s wars but instigated one of his own in Libya.

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For certain, over the years the prize has also honored a handful of individuals who have legitimately contributed to genuine peace through their humble, selfless, and often lonely campaigns against poverty, disease, and injustice. Included among those worthy recipients have been Chinese dissident [Liu Xiaobo](#) (last year’s winner); [Mother Teresa](#) (1979); and [Albert Schweitzer](#) (1952).



Additionally, countless self-sacrificing individuals have been nominated for the prize by friends, associates, and supporters who have personally witnessed their commitment to meeting the needs of others. Among those individuals is Maggie Gobran, an Egyptian Coptic Christian missionary who has been nominated for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize by five U.S. Congressmen who were impressed with her compassionate service among children and families living in Cairo’s garbage slums.

In a [letter to the Nobel Committee Council](#), the Congressmen — Frank Wolf (R-Va.), Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.), Joseph Pitts (R-Penn.), Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.), and John Carter (R-Texas) — asked that the lady known by those she cares for as “Mama Maggie” be seriously considered for the award. “Ms. Gobran is a woman of the utmost integrity and her tireless work has served thousands of Egyptians, including countless children,” the Congressmen wrote. “She has given a voice to the poor.”

The letter continued: “It is through her deep religious and moral commitment that Mama Maggie has succeeded in creating an organization that serves the most poor, desperate, and vulnerable population of Egypt. Clothed entirely in white, Mama Maggie is almost an angelic presence in Egypt’s slums, embodying the virtues of generosity, gentleness, and charity.”

Gobran, whose work has been compared to that of Mother Teresa’s in the slums of India, is the founder of [Stephen’s Children](#), an outreach in Cairo that helps individuals living in the city’s most desperately impoverished areas, providing assistance to both Christian and Muslim children and families. As reported by the [Anglican Journal](#), Gobran is a true minister of mercy in these impoverished locales, “where about 70,000 *zabbaleen* (garbage people) scrounge for food and clothing in the sprawling



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dumps. With its 1,500 workers and volunteers, Stephen's Children has provided services to more than 25,000 Egyptian families in Egypt through clinics, education, and vocational centers and camps. Named for the first Christian martyr, the charity's mission is to emulate the saint's compassion, service, and allegiance to God's word."

Gobran explained that she stumbled into her calling as a minister of Christ's compassion while living and working next to — but worlds away from — Cairo's poor and hurting. "I was teaching at American University in Cairo," Gobran, a Coptic Orthodox believer with an evangelical fervor, told Matt Cresswell of the [Church of England Newspaper](#). "I used to have the best elite students in the country as it was the college which gave the best education."

But during a visit, made out of curiosity, to Cairo's slums, Gobran was blown away by the poverty and misery she encountered for the first time in her life. She recalled that she was told many of the children she encountered were destined to perish before their fifth birthday. "I couldn't believe that a human being could survive such conditions," she recalled to Cresswell. "They had no water. Can you imagine a young baby surviving without clean water? There were also no schools, no churches, and no healthcare."

The experience caused Gobran to question whether God had mercy and love as she had been taught. "I asked Him: 'How can you see a human being living in such conditions?'" she recalled. "Then later, when I was reading the Bible and waiting for God to talk to me, I felt that he was saying that it was my turn to do something about it."

For the past 23 years, with God's help that is exactly what Gobran has been doing, fulfilling the spirit of Jesus' words in Matthew 25: "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

Even as conditions in Egypt have deteriorated and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism has made the mission of Stephen's Children more difficult, Gobran has insisted on fulfilling the call God has given her. "This is all I want to be," she said of her mission: "a mother to all." She added that "God has truly blessed and given us more than we have hoped or imagined: the wonderful opportunity to reach so many destitute children in such a closed part of the world."

It is, of course, highly unlikely that Gobran's nomination will receive more than a cursory glance from the Nobel selection committee. No doubt some deserving "peacemaker" from among the UN penthouse set will ultimately capture their hearts. Regardless, "Mama Maggie" will continue to lay up treasure for eternity, working tirelessly among Egypt's poor in body and spirit.

During a Christian leadership conference last year at Willow Creek Church in Chicago, Gobran put her mission — and the prize she is seeking — in proper perspective (see video below). "You know, we don't choose where to be born, but we do choose either to be sinners or saints," she told the assembled church and ministry leaders. "To be nobody or heroes. If you want to be a hero, do what God wants you to do."

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