

# Dr. Ruth Pfau

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**Born:** September 9, 1929

**Died:** August 10, 2017

**Known for:** Fighting Leprosy in Pakistan

**Title:** Mother Teresa of Pakistan

**Profession:** Doctor, Humanitarian, Nun

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**Dr. Ruth Pfau** (1929–2017) was a German Pakistani nun, physician, and humanitarian who dedicated her life to fighting leprosy in Pakistan. She is widely known as the "Mother Teresa of Pakistan" for her selfless service to the underprivileged.

### Early Life and Education

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Born in Leipzig, Germany, Dr. Pfau studied medicine at the University of Mainz. She joined the daughters of the Heart of Mary, a Catholic order, and came to Karachi in 1960. What was meant to be a short stay turned into a lifelong mission when she saw the suffering of leprosy patients in Pakistan.

## Medical and Social Contributions

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She founded the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) and dedicated more than 50 years to treating and rehabilitating people affected by leprosy. Besides leprosy, she also contributed to programs aimed at controlling tuberculosis and preventing blindness. Her approach focused not only on medical treatment but also on educating communities to reduce the stigma faced by patients. Through her compassionate care and tireless efforts, Dr. Pfau improved the lives of thousands and built a strong foundation for public health services in Pakistan.

## Leadership and Vision

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Dr. Pfau's leadership turned MALC into a national network, operating hundreds of treatment centers across Pakistan. She inspired thousands of volunteers and health workers with her compassion, commitment, and fearless approach to public health challenges.

## Global Recognition

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She received numerous awards, including Pakistan's Hilal-e-Imtiaz and Nishan-e-Quaid-e-Azam. In 2017, she was given a state funeral—one of the highest honors in Pakistan—making her the first Christian woman to receive such recognition.

## Legacy and Impact

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Dr. Ruth Pfau's life and work continue to inspire generations. She was given a rare state funeral in Pakistan, honoring her lifelong dedication. Her mission continues through the work of MALC, serving as a symbol of compassion and selfless service. Her model of care and service lives on through the institutions she built and the lives she touched. She proved that compassion knows no borders or religions.

## Famous Quotes

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*"I was not treating a disease; I was treating a person."*

*"To serve humanity is to serve God."*

*"You can't wait for others to help—you must do it yourself."*

*"We must make the invisible visible and give them dignity."*