

Cal Thomas

Boldly Speaking Truth To Power

At a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington February 3, Thursday, Mother Teresa of Calcutta delivered the most startling and bold proclamation of truth to power I have heard in my more than 30 professional years in Washington.

Before an audience of 3,000—which included the president and his wife, the vice president and his wife and congressional leaders, among others—the 83-year-old nun, who is physically frail but spiritually and rhetorically powerful, delivered an address that cut to the heart of the social ills afflicting America. She said America, once known for generosity to the world, has become selfish. And she said the greatest proof of that selfishness is abortion.

Tying abortion to growing violence and murder in the streets, she said, "If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell

other people not to kill each other? . . . Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want."

At that line, most of those in attendance erupted in a standing ovation, something that rarely occurs at these sedate events. At that moment, President Clinton quickly reached for his water glass, and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore stared without expression at Mother Teresa. They did not applaud. It was clearly an uncomfortable moment on the dais.

She then delivered the knockout punch: "Many people are very, very concerned with children in India, with the children of Africa where quite a few die of hunger, and so on. Many people are also concerned about all the violence in this great country of the United States. These

concerns are very good. But often these same people are not concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of their own mothers. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion, which brings people to such blindness."

What? Abortion destroys peace and causes blindness toward the sick, the hungry and the naked? Abortion leads to wars between nations? Of course it does, if life is regarded so lightly and its disposal becomes so trivial, so clinical and so easy. Why should people or nations regard human life as noble or dignified if abortion flourishes? Why agonize about indiscriminate death in Bosnia when babies are being killed far more efficiently and out of the sight of television cameras?

Mother Teresa delivered her address without rhetorical flourishes. She never raised her voice or pounded the lectern. Her power was in her words and the selfless life she had led. Even President Clinton, in his remarks that followed, acknow-

ledged she was beyond criticism because of the life she has lived in service to others.

At the end, she pleaded for pregnant women who don't want their

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children to give them to her: "I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child." She said she has placed more than 3,000 children in adoptive homes from her Calcutta headquarters alone. She has answered the question, "Who will care for all of these babies if abortion is again outlawed?" Now the question is whether a woman contemplating abortion wishes to be selfish or selfless, to take life or to give life.

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EXCERPTS FROM MOTHER TERESA'S FEBRUARY 3 REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

On the last day, Jesus will say to those on His right hand, "Come, enter the kingdom. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was sick and you visited Me." Then Jesus will turn to those on His left hand and say, "Depart from Me because I was hungry and you did not feed Me, I was thirsty and you did not give Me to drink, I was sick and you did not visit Me." These will ask Him, "When did we see You hungry, or thirsty or sick and did not come to Your help?" And Jesus will answer them, "Whatever you neglected to do unto one of the least of these, you neglected to do unto Me!" . . .

. . . It is not enough for us to say: "I love God," but I also have to love my neighbor. St. John says that you are a liar if you say you love God and you don't love your neighbor. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbor whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live? And so it is very important for us to realize that love, to be true, has to hurt. I must be willing to give whatever it takes not to harm other people and, in fact, to do good to them. This requires that I be willing to give until it hurts. Otherwise, there is no true love in me and I bring injustice, not peace, to those around me.

It hurt Jesus to love us . . .

. . . [I] feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child,

murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect the life of her child. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts.

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. That father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.

Many people are very, very concerned with the children of India, with the children of Africa where quite a few die of hunger, and so on. Many people are also concerned about all the violence in this great country of the United States. These concerns are very good. But often these same people are not concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of

their own mothers. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion which brings people to such blindness.

And for this I appeal in India and I appeal everywhere—"Let us bring the child back." The child is God's gift to the family. Each child is created in the special image and likeness of God for greater things—to love and to be loved. In this year of the family we must bring the child back to the center of our care and concern. This is the only way that our world can survive because our children are the only hope for the future. As older people are called to God, only their children can take their places.

But what does God say to us? He says: *Even if a mother could forget her child, I will not forget you. I have carved you in the palm of My hand.* We are carved in the palm of His hand; that unborn child has been carved in the hand of God from conception and is called by God to love and to be loved, not only now in this life, but forever. God can never forget us.

I will tell you something beautiful. We are fighting abortion by adoption—by care of the mother and adoption for her baby. We have saved thousands of lives. We have sent word to the clinics, to the hospitals and police stations: "Please don't destroy the child; we will take the child." So we always have someone tell the mothers in trouble: "Come, we will take care of

Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.

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Pius X Spiritual Renewal Center in Blackwood, N.J. The cost of the weekend is \$150, and transportation to and from the Philadelphia International Airport is provided. Space is limited, so those who wish to attend are encouraged to register early. To register for the retreat or for more information, contact the Rev. Mike Mannion, Newman Center, Rt. 322, Glassboro, N.J. 08028, (609) 881-5642.

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November 1994.
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Ethics, NRLC, Suite 500,
Washington, D.C., 20004.

destined to go downhill from here.

What Next?

No one should object when members of the academic elite exercise the privilege of publicly discussing their values (or lack thereof) regarding human life. But as philosopher Jenny Teichman of Cambridge University recently said, "the privilege is badly abused when academics call for the deaths of unwanted children or other innocent human beings." Moreover, "this particular misuse is also cowardly. The bioethics lobby never target anybody who might be able to hit back."

Embryonic human beings, the most vulnerable members of the human family, cannot hit back - - but their allies can. The NIH is required to accept and tabulate public comment on whether taxpayer funds should be used for these experiments. Concerned pro-life citizens can write to:

Steven Muller, Ph.D.
Chair, NIH Human Embryo Research Panel
c/o National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Building #1, Room 218
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dr. Muller and his colleagues need to hear that the "yuck factor" is alive and well.

Mr. Doerflinger is associate director for policy development at the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Mother Teresa

FROM PAGE 10

you, we will get a home for your child." And we have a tremendous demand from couples who cannot have a child—but I never give a child to a couple who have done something not to have a child. Jesus said, *Anyone who receives a child in My name, receives Me.* By adopting a child, these couples receive Jesus but, by aborting a child, a couple refuses to receive Jesus.

Please don't kill the child. I want the child. Please give me the child. I am willing to accept any child who

would be aborted and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child. From our children's home in Calcutta alone, we have saved over 3,000 children from abortion. These children have brought such love and joy to their adopting parents and have grown up so full of love and joy....

... We cannot solve all the problems in the world, but let us never bring in the worst problem of all, and that is to destroy love....