

## Top of the News

# Mother Teresa on pro-life visit

## Opens home for unwed mothers

By Brian Blomquist  
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It was an odd sight: Mother Teresa, Marion Barry and Hillary Rodham Clinton together on a stage in the District's affluent Chevy Chase neighborhood.

Mother Teresa came from her world-famous mission in Calcutta to join the president's wife and the mayor of Washington to dedicate a shelter for unwed mothers and their babies that she hopes will prevent abortions.

"I pray that we will be able to save every child that would be aborted," said Mother Teresa, 84.

It was a National Prayer Breakfast speech one year ago, in which Mother Teresa decried the abortion policies of the Clinton administration, that spawned her collaboration with Mrs. Clinton to open a home for unwed mothers.

Although Mrs. Clinton supports abortion rights and Mother Teresa considers abortion sinful, the two agreed on adoption as the best alternative.

"If you know there is a child who is unwanted and unloved, please bring it to me," Mother Teresa told a swarm of people who stood on the hot street in front of the Western Avenue house to see and hear her.

Mrs. Clinton said she envisions a world in which each child is loved by family and community, but added, "We know we are a long way from that, even in our own country."

The first lady also urged people to work at creating a better society. "We have to continue to work to build those kinds of con-

ditions for every child," she said. And Mrs. Clinton told Mother Teresa: "We take great inspiration from your work and your ceaseless pursuit of what you believe."

Mr. Barry also spoke of community, and said he hoped the creation of the home for unwed mothers would be the beginning of many things to come.

"Thank God for this day, a day pregnant with all kinds of possibilities," Mayor Barry said. "This community has shown great humanity."

On a short tour yesterday, Mother Teresa went room-to-room and blessed the three-story house with Cardinal James Hickey, saying prayers and sprinkling holy water as 100 nuns stood on the front lawn, singing the hymn "On This House, Your Blessing Lord."

Emerging from the house, Mother Teresa was a large presence despite her tiny frame. Parents lifted children and pointed, while men and women craned their necks as the nun, in her thick Indian accent, prayed for the children and mothers who will live in the house and spoke about love and Jesus Christ.

The house, which was purchased for the Catholic Church by an anonymous donor, will accommodate eight women and their children when it opens in a few months, according to one of the organizers, Kathleen Curtin. Four sisters in Mother Teresa's order, the Missionaries of Charity, will work there, taking care of the women and babies.

Catholic Charities will place the infants with adopting parents. The nun's order includes



Hillary Rodham Clinton helps Mother Teresa down the steps of the home. Cardinal James Hickey of Washington is at the far right. AP

more than 4,000 sisters and 450 brothers performing charity work all over the world.

Mr. Barry and Mrs. Clinton said there is a rising need for charity, especially if the trend toward slashing government will cause there to be fewer local and federal social programs for the sick and poor.

"All of us would not want teenagers who are unmarried to get pregnant, but they do," Mr. Barry said. "Once they do, we must do all that we can to take care of that mother and that child."

When Mother Teresa and Mrs. Clinton met in the house before the blessing, they talked about ways to improve the social conditions of Washington. Mother Teresa told Mrs. Clinton — somewhat in jest — that the home for unwed mothers "was a gift of love, but not a gift of peace, because I don't bring peace to anyone."

Mrs. Clinton said the line reminded her of Eleanor Roosevelt's pledge to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."