

CATHOLIC CONSCIENCE

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

By Cal Thomas

At a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington on February 3, 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 — that 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.

"This is ... the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion, which brings people to such blindness."

She said that America, once known for generosity to the world, has become selfish. And she said that 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



Mother Teresa decried the evil of abortion at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. on February 3, as President Bill Clinton and wife Hillary, left, and Vice President Al Gore and wife Tipper, right, look on.

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 has led. Even President Clinton, in his remarks that followed, acknowledged 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 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 over 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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SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM MOTHER TERESA'S SPEECH

"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."

"If we remember that God loves us, and that we can love others as He loves us, then America can become a sign of peace for the world. From here, a sign of care for the weakest of the weak—the unborn child—must go out to the world. If you become a burning light of justice and peace in the world, then really you will be true to what the founders of this country stood for. God bless you!"

Mother Teresa, February 3, 1994
(Full text on page 29.)

Christian Coalition will distribute 30 million
these postcards to 60,000 churches

Second: Abortion. The Clinton plan mandates abortion as a guaranteed basic benefit. It would require millions of Americans to subsidize the taking of human life against their consciences. According to a 1993 survey, 72 percent of the American people oppose taxpayer-funded abortion under a national

Christian Coalition Health Care Town Hall Meetings



- ★ Orlando, Florida, on February 10
- ★ Dallas, Texas, on March 5
- ★ Los Angeles, California, on March 12
- ★ Atlanta, Georgia, on March 19
- ★ Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the Easter Congressional recess