

Thomas Kelly, Barre

Testimony on Proposal 5, Proposed Constitutional Amendment (4 pages with two attachments)

House Human Services Committee

Public Hearing, April 17, 2019

What problem is the constitutional amendment, Proposal 5, addressing? What is the constituency for this movement? How is the so-called right-to-abortion at risk in Vermont? Much to my dismay even a complete overturning of Roe v. Wade would not seem to change a thing here in Vermont. Roe's holding addressed state laws which prohibit or restrict abortion. Vermont has no such law.

I refuse to accept that most Vermont legislators have asked for this; that you want to go down this road. I am appealing to your sense of decency and morality; your sense of right and wrong. And, as some pointed out at the public hearing the other night, your legacy.

With all humility I urge, you during this Holy Week to reverse this effort to craft legislation to create a statutory right to abortion and to amend the constitution of our State to enshrine a right to kill an unborn innocent human being. The human being's small size, its stage of development and its location in the womb should not result in a deprivation of any legal protection. It is one thing to silently tolerate, as Vermont has done for nearly half a century, without any legislation or regulation, unlimited access to abortion without any restrictions. This toleration continued even though the United States' Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade held that States *could* regulate abortion and even prohibit abortion to "preserve the potential life" (as the court noted and your legislative counsel has summarized) at later stages of pregnancy. Vermont has persistently and steadfastly refused to regulate or limit abortion apparently in the interest of the mother's autonomy. The mother's autonomy has been elevated above all other considerations.

It is another thing to enact a statute which provides for unfettered access to abortion without any limits throughout pregnancy and without any consideration for the unborn human being, up to the moment of birth. Vermont seeks to codify abortion up to the point of birth without any justification.

Further still, Vermont's representatives are embarked on a project to amend Vermont's charter to enshrine in our constitution the right to kill the innocents, up to the point of birth, without any justification.

Why? If, as you seem to fear, the federal Supreme Court were to completely overturn Roe v. Wade and permit the states to regulate or prohibit abortion, where would Vermont be then? Without this legislation, and without the amendment to the Vermont constitution, Vermont would remain silent and therefore without restrictions. How could anyone be prosecuted for an abortion crime or for violating

an abortion regulation without any abortion crimes or regulations on the books? The legislation and the constitutional amendment do nothing but make a political statement. If new federal legislation or some interpretation of the federal constitution were to somehow limit abortion in Vermont, no Vermont statute or constitutional amendment would control.

Some have suggested that current federal law prohibits certain partial birth abortions, so Vermont's policy does not matter. Representative Tommy Walz told me that late-term abortions do not occur in Vermont anyway. Mr. Walz said, "abortions are performed after 24 weeks in Vermont only in very rare cases" and "[t]here is no elective abortion after 24 weeks" in Vermont. OK. So why the legislation and the amendment to the constitution? To put an exclamation point on Vermont public policy that ignores the innocent human life in the womb because of its stage of development and its location? The question for Vermont when crafting legislation and constitutional amendments is not whether late term abortions occur here; the question is, *should* late-term (or any) abortions occur here.

As an aside I note that a nurse from the neo-natal surgical ward at UVM testified on April 17 against your efforts to craft legislation and to amend the constitution. Her statement was startling, frankly, and suggested late-term abortions are not so rare. Do Vermont doctors have an ethical problem with abortion, particularly late-term abortions? Have you solicited their testimony?

Why does the legislature persist in ignoring the unborn human life in the womb? Look at the film *Unplanned*, the true story of Abbey Johnson former abortion clinic director turned pro-life activist. Her epiphany occurred when she assisted in the abortion of a 13-week-old and saw the ultra-sound image of the child struggling to avoid the suction machine; then the body disintegrates, and the bloody remains are sucked through the tubing and the womb is empty. I urge you to at least watch the first 15 minutes of the film. You should be fully informed as to what you are approving, and I dare say encouraging; the law is a teacher. Another film, *Gosnell*, the true story of an abortion doctor in Pennsylvania who is now in jail for murdering children after botched abortions, was not shown in any Vermont theaters until the annual March for Life, to which one of the film makers was invited and spoke here in this Statehouse.

As a Vermonter I ask you to reconsider these proposals and vote no on this legally pointless effort to score points political points.

Instead adopt legislation to regulate and prohibit abortion, at least consistent with the law as outlined by the United States' Supreme Court.

This legislation and effort to amend the constitution are both morally untenable.

Mr. Walz pointed out to me that H57 "passed the House 106-37", adding "[t]hat is overwhelming support." As Frederick Douglass said, "God plus one is a majority."

See attached Mother Teresa's address to the 1994 Prayer Breakfast during the Clinton administration. She said, "[T]he 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."

John Paul II said of abortion:

Laws which authorize and promote abortion and euthanasia are therefore radically opposed not only to the good of the individual but also to the common good; as such they are completely lacking in authentic juridical validity. Disregard for the right to life, precisely because it leads to the killing of the person whom society exists to serve, is what most directly conflicts with the possibility of achieving the common good. Consequently, a civil law authorizing abortion or euthanasia ceases by that very fact to be a true, morally binding civil law.

The legal toleration of abortion and euthanasia can in no way claim to be based on respect for the conscience of others, precisely because society has the right and the duty to protect itself against the abuses which can occur in the name of conscience and under the pretext of freedom.

But responsibility likewise falls on the legislators who have promoted and approved abortion laws, and to the extent that they have a say in the matter, on the administrators of the health-care centers where abortions are performed. In this sense abortion goes beyond the responsibility of individuals and beyond the harm done to them and takes on a distinctly social dimension. It is the most serious wound inflicted on society and its culture by the very people [(you)] who ought to be society's promoters and defenders.

Laws which legitimize the direct killing of innocent human beings through abortion or euthanasia are in complete opposition to the inviolable right to life proper to every individual; they thus deny the equality of everyone before the law.

It has been said abortions in Vermont are safe. Safe for whom? They are not safe for the unborn innocent human being Roe inaccurately termed merely "potential" life. Ask

the medical folks about this term. Potential? Earlier stage of development yes; but totally alive and totally human.

Does Vermont want to be the poster-boy for the Culture of Death? As the current edition of *National Catholic Register* editorializes, the fear that “the recent additions to the high court might bring decisions that allow restrictions on abortion has sparked a wave of legislation that even many supporters of the ‘pro-choice’ movement have found horrifyingly extreme. In February, the New York legislature approved, and Governor Cuomo signed one of the most brutal abortion laws in history, permitting abortion in the third trimester and writing into law what is tantamount to infanticide. Similarly gruesome legislation has been proposed in Virginia, Vermont, New Mexico and Rhode Island.”

Earlier this week I attended an art presentation at the library here in Montpelier by a group of special adults, my daughter among them. Their lives are as valuable as yours or mine. It was not for their parents, their doctors or their government to decide the value of their lives and deprive them of life at an early stage because of a fear that persons at a later stage would be inconvenienced.

List of Attachments:

1. Excerpt, Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2270-2275 (abortion is gravely contrary to the moral law; inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation; the moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law)
2. *Mother Teresa's National Prayer Breakfast Message, February 3, 1994*

Infanticide,⁶⁹ fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

2269 The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person's death. the moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.

The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them.⁷⁰

Unintentional killing is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.

Abortion

2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁷¹

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.⁷²

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.⁷³

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion.

This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.

Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁴

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves.

Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁵

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.

The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life.

"A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,"⁷⁶ "by the very commission of the offense,"⁷⁷ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.⁷⁸

The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy.

Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority.

These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin.

Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."⁷⁹

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law.

When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined....

As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."⁸⁰

2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual....

It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."⁸¹

2275 "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."⁸²

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."⁸³

"Certain attempts to influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities.

Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"⁸⁴ which are unique and unrepeatable.

Euthanasia

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

Home > Topics > Ethics > Abortion > Mother Teresa's National Prayer Breakfast Message

MOTHER TERESA'S NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST MESSAGE

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

On February 3, 1994, Mother Teresa was invited to speak at the National Prayer Breakfast sponsored by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. President Clinton and his wife Hillary along with Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper were also in attendance. The room got very quiet at spoke about the violence of abortion. But the applause began and became nearly unanimous, with four notable exceptions. Here is the text of her address.

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 these least of these, you neglected to do unto Me!"

As we have gathered here to pray together, I think it will be beautiful if we begin with a prayer that expresses very well what Jesus wants us to do for the least. St. Francis of Assisi understood very well these words of Jesus and His life is very well expressed by a prayer. And this prayer, which we say every day after Holy Communion, always surprises me very much, because it is very fitting for each one of us. And I always wonder whether 800 years ago when St. Francis lived, they had the same difficulties that we have today. I think that some of you already have this prayer of peace – so we will pray it together.

Let us thank God for the opportunity He has given us today to have come here to pray together. We have come here especially to pray for peace, joy and love. We are reminded that Jesus came to bring the good news to the poor. He had told us what is that good news when He said: "My peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." He came not to give the peace of the world which is only that we don't bother each other. He came to give the peace of heart which comes from loving – from doing good to others.

And God loved the world so much that He gave His son – it was a giving. God gave His son to the Virgin Mary, and what did she do with Him? As soon as Jesus came into Mary's life, immediately she went in haste to give that good news. And as she came into the house of her cousin, Elizabeth, Scripture tells us that the unborn child – the child in the womb of Elizabeth – leapt with joy. While still in the womb of Mary – Jesus brought peace to John the Baptist who leapt for joy in the womb of Elizabeth. The unborn was the first one to proclaim the coming of Christ.

And as if that were not enough, as if it were not enough that God the Son should become one of us and bring peace and joy while still in the womb of Mary, Jesus also died on the Cross to show that greater love. He died for you and for me, and for the leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street, not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and everywhere. Our Sisters serve these poor people in 105 countries throughout the world. Jesus insisted that we love one another as He loves each one of us. Jesus gave His life to love us and He tells us that we also have to give whatever it takes to do good to one another. And in the Gospel Jesus says very clearly: "Love as I have loved you."

Jesus died on the Cross because that is what it took for Him to do good to us – to save us from our selfishness in sin. He gave up everything to do the Father's will – to show us that we too must be willing to give up everything to do God's will – to love one another as He loves each of us. If we are not willing to give whatever it takes to do good to one another, sin is still in us. That is why we too must give to each other until it hurts.

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 not true love in me and I bring injustice, not peace, to those around me.

It hurt Jesus to love us. We have been created in His image for greater things, to love and to be loved. We must "put on Christ" as Scripture tells us. And so, we have been created to love as He loves us. Jesus makes Himself the hungry one, the naked one, the homeless one, the unwanted one, and He says, "You did it to Me." On the last day He will say to those on His right, "whatever you did to the least of these, you did to Me, and He will also say to those on His left, whatever you neglected to do for the least of these, you neglected to do it for Me."

When He was dying on the Cross, Jesus said, "I thirst." Jesus is thirsting for our love, and this is the thirst of everyone, poor and rich alike. We all thirst for the love of others, that they go out of their way to avoid harming us and to do good to us. This is the meaning of true love, to give until it hurts.

I can never forget the experience I had in visiting a home where they kept all these old parents of sons and daughters who had just put them into an institution and forgotten them – maybe. I saw that in that home these old people had everything – good food, comfortable place, television, everything, but everyone was looking toward the door. And I did not see a single one with a smile on the face. I turned to Sister and I asked:

"Why do these people who have every comfort here, why are they all looking toward the door? Why are they not smiling?"

I am so used to seeing the smiles on our people, even the dying ones smile. And Sister said: "This is the way it is nearly everyday. They are expecting, they are hoping that a son or daughter will come to visit them. They are hurt because they are forgotten." And see, this neglect to love brings spiritual poverty. Maybe in our own family we have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried. Are we there? Are we willing to give until it hurts in order to be with our families, or do we put our own interests first? These are the questions we must ask ourselves, especially as we begin this year of the family. We must remember that love begins at home and we must also remember that 'the future of humanity passes through the family.'

I was surprised in the West to see so many young boys and girls given to drugs. And I tried to find out why. Why is it like that, when those in the West have so many more things than those in the East? And the answer was: 'Because there is no one in the family to receive them.' Our children depend on us for everything – their health, their nutrition, their security, their coming to know and love God. For all of this, they look to us with trust, hope and expectation. But often father and mother are so busy they have no time for their children, or perhaps they are not even married or have given up on their marriage. So their children go to the streets and get involved in drugs or other things. We are talking of love of the child, which is where love and peace must begin. These are the things that break peace.

But 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, that father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. The 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 loved, not only now in this life, but forever. God can never forget us.

The beautiful gift God has given our congregation is to fight abortion by adoption. We have already, from our house in Calcutta, over 3,000 children adoption. And I can’t tell you what joy, what love, what peace those children have brought into those families. It has been a real gift of God for them and for us. I remember one of the little ones was very sick, so I sent for the father and the mother and I asked them: “Please give me back the sick child. I will give you a healthy one.” And the father looked at me and said, “Mother Teresa, take my life first than take the child.” So beautiful to see it—so much

love, so much joy that little one has brought into that family. So pray for us that we continue this beautiful gift. And also I offer you—our Sisters are here—anybody who doesn't want the child, please give it to me. I want the child.

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 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 3000 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.

I know that couples have to plan their family and for that there is natural family planning. The way to plan the family is natural family planning, not contraception. In destroying the power of giving life, through contraception, a husband or wife is doing something to self. This turns the attention to self and so it destroys the gifts of love in him or her. In loving, the husband and wife must turn the attention to each other as happens in natural family planning, and not to self, as happens in contraception. Once that living love is destroyed by contraception, abortion follows very easily.

I also know that there are great problems in the world – that many spouses do not love each other enough to practice natural family planning. 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. And this is what happens when we tell people to practice contraception and abortion.

The poor are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. Once one of them came to thank us for teaching her natural family planning and said: "You people who have practiced chastity, you are the best people to teach us natural family planning because it is nothing more than self-control out of love for each other." And what this poor person said is very true. These poor people maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home to live in, but they can still be great people when they are spiritually rich.

When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread. But a person who is shut out, who feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person who has been thrown out of society – that spiritual poverty is much harder to overcome. And abortion, which often follows from contraception, brings a people to be spiritually poor, and that is the worst poverty and the most difficult to overcome.

Those who are materially poor can be very wonderful people. One evening we went out and we picked up four people from the street. And one of them was in a most terrible condition. I told the Sisters: "You take care of the other three; I will take care of the one who looks worse." So I did for her all that my love can do. I put her in bed, and there was such a beautiful smile on her face. She took hold of my hand, as she said one word only: "thank you" – and she died.

I could not help but examine my conscience before her. And I asked: "What would I say if I were in her place?" And my answer was very simple. I would have tried to draw a little attention to myself. I would have said: "I am hungry, I am dying, I am cold, I am in pain," or something. But she gave me much more – she gave me her grateful love. And she died with a smile on her face. Then there was the man we picked up from the drain, half eaten by worms and, after we had brought him to the home, he only said, "I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die as an angel, loved and cared for." Then, after we had removed all the worms from his body, all he said, with a big smile, was: "Sister, I am going home to God" – and he died. It was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that without blaming anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel – this is the greatness of people who are spiritually rich even when they are materially poor.

We are not social workers. We may be doing social work in the eyes of some people, but we must be contemplatives in the heart of the world. For we must bring that presence of God into your family, for the family that prays together, stays together. There is so much hatred, so much misery, and we with our prayer, with our sacrifice, are beginning at home. Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put into what we do.

If we are contemplatives in the heart of the world with all its problems, these problems can never discourage us. We must always remember what God tells us in Scripture: "Even if a mother could forget the child in her womb" – something impossible, but even if she could forget – "I will never forget you."

And so here I am talking with you. I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there. Be that good news to your own people first. And find out about your next-door neighbors. Do you know who they are?

I had the most extraordinary experience of love of neighbor with a Hindu family. A gentleman came to our house and said: "Mother Teresa, there is a family who have not eaten for so long. Do something." So I took some rice and went there immediately. And I saw the children – their eyes shining with hunger. I don't know if you have ever seen hunger. But I have seen it very often. And the mother of the family took the rice I gave her and went out. When she came back, I asked her: "Where did you go? What did you do?" And she gave me a very simple answer: "They are hungry also." What struck me was that she knew – and who are they? A Muslim family – and she knew. I didn't bring any more rice that evening because I wanted them, Hindus and Muslims, to enjoy the joy of sharing.

But there were those children, radiating joy, sharing the joy and peace with their mother because she had the love to give until it hurts. And you see this is where love begins – at home in the family.

So, as the example of this family shows, God will never forget us and there is something you and I can always do. We can keep the joy of loving Jesus in our hearts, and share that joy with all we come in contact with. Let us make that one point – that no child will

be unwanted, unloved, uncared for, or killed and thrown away. And give until it hurts – with a smile.

As you know, we have a number of homes here in the United States, where people need tender love and care. This is the joy of sharing. Come and share. We have the young people suffering with AIDS. They need that tender love and care. But such beautiful—I've never yet seen a young man or anybody displeased or angry or frightened, really going home to God. Such a beautiful smile, always. So let us pray that we have the gift of sharing the joy with others and giving until it hurts.

Because I talk so much of giving with a smile, once a professor from the United States asked me: "Are you married?" And I said: "Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at my spouse, Jesus, because He can be very demanding – sometimes." This is really something true. And this is where love comes in – when it is demanding, and yet we can give it with joy.

One of the most demanding things for me is travelling everywhere – and with publicity. I have said to Jesus that if I don't go to heaven for anything else, I will be going to heaven for all the travelling with all the publicity, because it has purified me and sacrificed me and made me really ready to go home to God.

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.

Let us love one another as God loves each one of us. And where does this love begin? In our own home. How does it begin? By praying together. Pray for us that we continue God's work with great love. The sisters, the brothers, and the fathers and the lay Missionaries of Charity and co-workers: we are all one heart full of love, that we may bring that joy of love everywhere we go. And my prayer for you is that through this love for one another, for this peace and joy in the family, that you may grow in holiness. Holiness is not the luxury of the few; it is a simply duty, for you and for me, because

Jesus has very clearly stated, "Be ye holy as my father in heaven is holy." So let us pray for each other that we grow in love for each other, and through this love become holy as Jesus wants us to be for he died out of love for us.

One day I met a lady who was dying of cancer in a most terrible condition. And I told her, I say, "You know, this terrible pain is only the kiss of Jesus—a sign that you have come so close to Jesus on the cross that he can kiss you." And she joined her hands together and said, "Mother Teresa, please tell Jesus to stop kissing me."

So pray for us that we continue God's work with great love and I will pray for you, for all your families. And also I want to thank the families who have been so generous in giving their daughters to us to consecrate their life to Jesus by the vow of poverty, chastity, obedience, and by giving wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor. This is our fourth vow in our congregation. And we have a novitiate in San Francisco where we have many beautiful vocations who are wanting to give their whole life to Jesus in the service of the poorest of the poor.

So once more I thank you for giving you children to God. And pray for us that we continue God's work with great love.

God bless you all!

This is the full, unedited text of Mother Teresa of Calcutta's speech to the National Prayer Breakfast sponsored by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on February 3, 1994 with President Bill and Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al & Tipper Gore in attendance.

Originally posted on Sep 02 2016



Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, the future Mother Teresa, was born on 26 August 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia, to Albanian heritage. Her father, a well-respected local businessman, died when she was eight years old, leaving her mother, a devoutly religious woman, to open an embroidery and cloth business to support the family.

After spending her adolescence deeply involved in parish activities, Agnes left home in September 1928, for the Loreto Convent in Rathfarnham (Dublin), Ireland, where she was admitted as a postulant on October 12 and received the name of Teresa, after her patroness, St. Therese of Lisieux. Agnes was sent by the Loreto order to India and arrived in Calcutta on 6 January 1929. Upon her arrival, she joined the Loreto novitiate in Darjeeling. She made her final profession as a Loreto nun on 24 May 1937, and hereafter was called Mother Teresa. While living in Calcutta during the 1930s and '40s, she taught in St. Mary's Bengali Medium School. On 10 September 1946, on a train journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling, Mother Teresa received what she termed the "call within a call," which was to give rise to the Missionaries of Charity family of Sisters, Brothers, Fathers, and Co-Workers. The content of this inspiration is revealed in the aim and mission she would give to her new institute: "to quench the infinite thirst of Jesus on the cross for love and souls" by "labouring at the salvation and sanctification of the poorest of the poor." On October 7, 1950, the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially erected as a religious institute for the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Mother Teresa expanded the work of the Missionaries of Charity both within Calcutta and throughout India. On 1 February 1965, Pope Paul VI granted the Decree of Praise to the Congregation, raising it to pontifical right. The first foundation outside India opened in Cocorote, Venezuela, in 1965. The Society expanded to Europe (the Tor Fiscale suburb of Rome) and Africa (Tabora, Tanzania) in 1968. From the late 1960s until 1980, the Missionaries of Charity expanded both in their reach across the globe and in their number of members. Mother Teresa opened houses in Australia, the Middle East, and North America, and the first novitiate outside Calcutta in London. In 1979 Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. By that same year there were 158 Missionaries of Charity foundations. The Missionaries of Charity reached Communist countries in 1979 with a house in Zagreb, Croatia, and in 1980 with a house in East Berlin, and continued to expand through the 1980s and 1990s with houses in almost all Communist nations, including 15 foundations in the former Soviet Union. Despite repeated efforts, however, Mother Teresa was never able to

open a foundation in China. Mother Teresa spoke at the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly in October 1985. On Christmas Eve of that year, Mother Teresa opened "Gift of Love" in New York, her first house for AIDS patients. In the coming years, this home would be followed by others, in the United States and elsewhere, devoted specifically for those with AIDS. From the late 1980s through the 1990s, despite increasing health problems, Mother Teresa traveled across the world for the profession of novices, opening of new houses, and service to the poor and disaster-stricken. New communities were founded in South Africa, Albania, Cuba, and war-torn Iraq. By 1997, the Sisters numbered nearly 4,000 members, and were established in almost 600 foundations in 123 countries of the world. After a summer of traveling to Rome, New York, and Washington, in a weak state of health, Mother Teresa returned to Calcutta in July 1997. At 9:30 PM, on 5 September, Mother Teresa died at the Motherhouse. Her body was transferred to St Thomas's Church, next to the Loreto convent where she had first arrived nearly 69 years earlier. Hundreds of thousands of people from all classes and all religions, from India and abroad, paid their respects. She received a state funeral on 13 September, her body being taken in procession - on a gun carriage that had also borne the bodies of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru - through the streets of Calcutta. Presidents, prime ministers, queens, and special envoys were present on behalf of countries from all over the world.