I thought I'd share with you some interesting information, gathered from various sources, about this remarkable woman who made such a huge difference in so many people's lives. Below you will find a bit on her background, her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, her brief to the U.S. Supreme Court regarding abortion, a short explanation on her canonization process, some of her quotations, and a neat PowerPoint presentation on her life. I hope it all helps you appreciate the kind of person she was…and the kind of saint she is.



Who Was Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was always her own person, startlingly independent, obedient, yet challenging some preconceived notions and expectations. Her own life story includes many illustrations of her willingness to listen to and follow her own conscience, even when it seemed to contradict what was expected. This strong and independent Slavic woman was born Gonxha (Agnes) Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Yugoslavia, on August 27, 1910.

Five children were born to Nikola and Dronda Bojaxhiu, yet only three survived. Gonxha was the youngest, with an older sister, Aga, and brother, Lazar. This brother describes the family's early years as well-off, not the life of peasants reported inaccurately by some. We lacked for nothing. In fact, the family lived in one of the two houses they owned. Nikola was a contractor, working with a partner in a successful construction business.

He was also heavily involved in the politics of the day. Lazar tells of his father's rather sudden and shocking death, which may have been due to poisoning because of his political involvement. With this event, life changed overnight as their mother assumed total responsibility for the family, Aga, only 14, Lazar, 9, and Gonxha, 7. Though so much of her young life was centered in the Church, Mother Teresa later revealed that until she reached 18, she had never thought of being a nun.

During her early years, however, she was fascinated with stories of missionary life and service. She could locate any number of missions on the map, and tell others of the service being given in each place. Called to Religious Life At 18, Gonxha decided to follow the path that seems to have been unconsciously unfolding throughout her life. She chose the Loreto Sisters of Dublin, missionaries and educators founded in the 17th century to educate young girls. In 1928, the future Mother Teresa began her religious life in Ireland, far from her family and the life she'd known, never seeing her mother again in this life, speaking a language few understood.

During this period a sister novice remembered her as very small, quiet and shy, and another member of the congregation described her as ordinary. Mother Teresa herself, even with the later decision to begin her own community of religious, continued to value her beginnings with the Loreto sisters and to maintain close ties. Unwavering commitment and self-discipline, always a part of her life and reinforced in her association with the Loreto sisters, seemed to stay with her throughout her life. One year later, in 1929, Gonxha was sent to Darjeeling to the novitiate of the Sisters of Loreto.

In 1931, she made her first vows there, choosing the name of Teresa, honoring both saints of the same name, Teresa of Avila and Therese of Lisieux. In keeping with the usual procedures of the congregation and her deepest desires, it was time for the new Sister Teresa to begin her years of service to God's people. She was sent to St. Mary's, a high school for girls in a district of Calcutta. Here she began a career teaching history and geography, which she reportedly did with dedication and enjoyment for the next 15 years. It was in the protected environment of this school for the daughters of the wealthy that Teresa's new vocation

developed and grew.

This was the clear message, the invitation to her second calling, that Teresa heard on that fateful day in 1946 when she traveled to Darjeeling for retreat. The Streets of Calcutta During the next two years, Teresa pursued every avenue to follow what she never doubted was the direction God was pointing her. She was to give up even Loreto where I was very happy and to go out in the streets. I heard the call to give up all and follow Christ into the slums to serve him among the poorest of the poor. Technicalities and practicalities abounded. She had to be released formally, not from her perpetual vows, but from living within the convents of the Sisters of Loreto. She had to confront the Church's resistance to forming new religious communities, and receive permission from the Archbishop of Calcutta to serve the poor openly on the streets. She had to figure out how to live and work on the streets, without the safety and comfort of the convent.

As for clothing, Teresa decided she would set aside the habit she had worn during her years as a Loreto sister and wear the ordinary dress of an Indian woman: a plain white sari and sandals. Teresa first went to Patna for a few months to prepare for her future work by taking a nursing course. In 1948 she received permission from Pius XII to leave her community and live as an independent nun. So back to Calcutta she went and found a small hovel to rent to begin her new undertaking. Wisely, she thought to start by teaching the children of the slums, an endeavor she knew well.

Though she had no proper equipment, she made use of what was available—writing in the dirt. She strove to make the children of the poor literate, to teach them basic hygiene. As they grew to know her, she gradually began visiting the poor and ill in their families and others all crowded together in the surrounding squalid shacks, inquiring about their needs. Teresa found a never-ending stream of human needs in the poor she met, and frequently was exhausted. Despite the weariness of her days she never omitted her prayer, finding it the source of support, strength and blessing for all her ministry.

A Movement Begins Teresa was not alone for long. Within a year, she found more help than

she anticipated. Many seemed to have been waiting for her example to open their own floodgates of charity and compassion. Young women came to volunteer their services and later became the core of her Missionaries of Charity. Others offered food, clothing, the use of buildings, medical supplies and money. As support and assistance mushroomed, more and more services became possible to huge numbers of suffering people. From their birth in Calcutta, nourished by the faith, compassion and commitment of Mother Teresa, the Missionaries of Charity have grown like the mustard seed of the Scriptures. New vocations continue to come from all parts of the world, serving those in great need wherever they are found. Homes for the dying, refuges for the care and teaching of orphans and abandoned children, treatment centers and hospitals for those suffering from leprosy, centers and refuges for alcoholics, the aged and street people—the list is endless.

Until her death in 1997, Mother Teresa continued her work among the poorest of the poor, depending on God for all of her needs. Honors too numerous to mention had come her way throughout the years, as the world stood astounded by her care for those usually deemed of little value. In her own eyes she was God’s pencil—a tiny bit of pencil with which he writes what he likes.

Despite years of strenuous physical, emotional and spiritual work, Mother Teresa seemed unstoppable. Though frail and bent, with numerous ailments, she always returned to her work, to those who received her compassionate care for more than 50 years.

Only months before her death, when she became too weak to manage the administrative work, she relinquished the position of head of her Missionaries of Charity. She knew the work would go on. Finally, on September 5, 1997, after finishing her dinner and prayers, her weakened heart gave her back to the God who was the very center of her life.

— Source: FreeEssays.cc

Mother Teresa's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech – December 11, 1979 Oslo, Norway:

"As we have gathered here together to thank God for the Nobel Peace Prize I think it will be beautiful that we pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which always surprises me very much — we pray this prayer every day after Holy Communion, because it is very fitting for each one of us, and I always wonder that 4-500 years ago as St. Francis of Assisi composed this prayer that they had the same difficulties that we have today, as we compose this prayer that fits very nicely for us also. I think some of you already have got it — so we will pray together.

Let us thank God for the opportunity that we all have together today, for this gift of peace that reminds us that we have been created to live that peace, and Jesus became man to bring that good news to the poor. He being God became man in all things like us except sin, and he proclaimed very clearly that he had come to give the good news. The news was peace to all of good will and this is something that we all want — the peace of heart — and God loved the world so much that he gave his son — it was a giving — it is as much as if to say it hurt God to give, because he loved the world so much that he gave his son, and he gave him to Virgin Mary, and what did she do with him?

As soon as he came in her life — immediately she went in haste to give that good news, and as she came into the house of her cousin, the child — the unborn child — the child in the womb of Elizabeth, leapt with joy. He was that little unborn child, was the first messenger of peace. He recognised the Prince of Peace, he recognised that Christ has come to bring the good news for you and for me. And as if that was not enough — it was not enough to become a man — he died on the cross to show that greater love, and he died for you and for me and for that leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and New York, and London, and Oslo — and insisted that we love one another as he loves each one of us. And we read that in the Gospel very clearly — love as I have loved you — as I love you — as the Father has loved me, I love you — and the harder the Father loved him, he gave him to us, and how much we love one another, we, too,

must give each other until it hurts. It is not enough for us to say: I love God, but I do not love my neighbour. St. John says you are a liar if you say you love God and you don't love your neighbour. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbour whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live. And so this is very important for us to realise that love, to be true, has to hurt. It hurt Jesus to love us, it hurt him. And to make sure we remember his great love he made himself the bread of life to satisfy our hunger for his love. Our hunger for God, because we have been created for that love. We have been created in his image. We have been created to love and be loved, and then he has become man to make it possible for us to love as he loved us. He makes himself the hungry one — the naked one — the homeless one — the sick one — the one in prison — the lonely one — the unwanted one — and he says: You did it to me. Hungry for our love, and this is the hunger of our poor people. This is the hunger that you and I must find, it may be in our own home.

I never forget an opportunity I had in visiting a home where they had all these old parents of sons and daughters who had just put them in an institution and forgotten maybe. And I went there, and I saw in that home they had everything, beautiful things, but everybody was looking towards the door. And I did not see a single one with their smile on their face. And I turned to the Sister and I asked: How is that? How is it that the people they have everything here, why are they all looking towards the door, why are they not smiling? I am so used to see the smile on our people, even the dying one smile, and she said: This is nearly every day, 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 is where love comes. That poverty comes right there in our own home, even neglect to love. Maybe in our own family we have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried, and these are difficult days for everybody. Are we there, are we there to receive them, is the mother there to receive the child?

I was surprised in the West to see so many young boys and girls given into drugs, and I tried to find out why — why is it like that, and the answer was: Because there is no one in the family to receive them. Father and mother are so busy they have no time. Young parents are in some institution and the child takes back to the street and gets involved in something. We

are talking of peace. These are things that break peace, but I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a direct war, a direct killing — direct murder by the mother herself. And we read in the Scripture, for God says very clearly: 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, so close to Him that unborn child has been carved in the hand of God. And that is what strikes me most, the beginning of that sentence, that even if a mother could forget something impossible — but even if she could forget — I will not forget you. And today the greatest means — the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion. And we who are standing here — our parents wanted us. We would not be here if our parents would do that to us. Our children, we want them, we love them, but what of the millions. Many people are very, very concerned with the children in India, with the children in Africa where quite a number die, maybe of malnutrition, of hunger and so on, but millions are dying deliberately by the will of the mother. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today. Because if a mother can kill her own child — what is left for me to kill you and you kill me — there is nothing between. And this I appeal in India, I appeal everywhere: Let us bring the child back, and this year being the child's year: What have we done for the child? At the beginning of the year I told, I spoke everywhere and I said: Let us make this year that we make every single child born, and unborn, wanted. And today is the end of the year, have we really made the children wanted? I will give you something terrifying. We are fighting abortion by adoption, we have saved thousands of lives, we have sent words to all the clinics, to the hospitals, police stations — please don't destroy the child, we will take the child. So every hour of the day and night it is always somebody, we have quite a number of unwedded mothers — tell them come, we will take care of you, we will take the child from you, and we will get a home for the child. And we have a tremendous demand from families who have no children, that is the blessing of God for us. And also, we are doing another thing which is very beautiful — we are teaching our beggars, our leprosy patients, our slum dwellers, our people of the street, natural family planning.

And in Calcutta alone in six years — it is all in Calcutta — we have had 61,273 babies less from the families who would have had, but because they practise this natural way of abstaining, of self-control, out of love for each other. We teach them the temperature meter

which is very beautiful, very simple, and our poor people understand. And you know what they have told me? Our family is healthy, our family is united, and we can have a baby whenever we want. So clear — those people in the street, those beggars — and I think that if our people can do like that how much more you and all the others who can know the ways and means without destroying the life that God has created in us.

The poor people are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. The other day one of them came to thank and said: You people who have vowed chastity you are the best people to teach us family planning. Because it is nothing more than self-control out of love for each other. And I think they said a beautiful sentence. And these are people who maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home where to live, but they are great people.The poor are 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 — and I told the Sisters: You take care of the other three, I take of this one that looked 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 was 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, that 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. As that man whom we picked up from the drain, half eaten with worms, and we brought him to the home. I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die like an angel, loved and cared for. And it was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that, who could die like that without blaming anybody, without cursing anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel — this is the greatness of our people. And that is why we believe what Jesus had said: I was hungry — I was naked — I was homeless — I was unwanted, unloved, uncared for — and you did it to me.

I believe that we are not real social workers. We may be doing social work in the eyes of the people, but we are really contemplatives in the heart of the world. For we are touching the

Body of Christ 24 hours. We have 24 hours in this presence, and so you and I. You too try to bring that presence of God in your family, for the family that prays together stays together. And I think that we in our family don't need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace — just get together, love one another, bring that peace, that joy, that strength of presence of each other in the home. And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world.

There is so much suffering, 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 in the action that we do. It is to God Almighty — how much we do it does not matter, because He is infinite, but how much love we put in that action. How much we do to Him in the person that we are serving.

Some time ago in Calcutta we had great difficulty in getting sugar, and I don't know how the word got around to the children, and a little boy of four years old, Hindu boy, went home and told his parents: I will not eat sugar for three days, I will give my sugar to Mother Teresa for her children. After three days his father and mother brought him to our home. I had never met them before, and this little one could scarcely pronounce my name, but he knew exactly what he had come to do. He knew that he wanted to share his love.

And this is why I have received such a lot of love from you all. From the time that I have come here I have simply been surrounded with love, and with real, real understanding love. It could feel as if everyone in India, everyone in Africa is somebody very special to you. And I felt quite at home I was telling Sister today. I feel in the Convent with the Sisters as if I am in Calcutta with my own Sisters. So completely at home here, right here.

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. And find out about your next-door neighbour — do you know who they are? I had the most extraordinary experience with a Hindu family who had eight children. A gentleman came to our house and said: Mother Teresa, there is a family with eight children, they had not eaten for so long — do something. So I took some rice and I went there immediately. And I saw the children — their eyes

shinning with hunger — I don't know if you have ever seen hunger. But I have seen it very often. And she took the rice, she divided the rice, and she 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 most was that she knew — and who are they, a Muslim family — and she knew. I didn't bring more rice that evening because I wanted them to enjoy the joy of sharing. But there were those children, radiating joy, sharing the joy with their mother because she had the love to give. And you see this is where love begins — at home. And I want you — and I am very grateful for what I have received. It has been a tremendous experience and I go back to India — I will be back by next week, the 15th I hope — and I will be able to bring your love.

And I know well that you have not given from your abundance, but you have given until it has hurt you. Today the little children they have — I was so surprised — there is so much joy for the children that are hungry. That the children like themselves will need love and care and tenderness, like they get so much from their parents. So let us thank God that we have had this opportunity to come to know each other, and this knowledge of each other has brought us very close. And we will be able to help not only the children of India and Africa, but will be able to help the children of the whole world, because as you know our Sisters are all over the world. And with this prize that I have received as a prize of peace, I am going to try to make the home for many people that have no home. Because I believe that love begins at home, and if we can create a home for the poor — I think that more and more love will spread. And we will be able through this understanding love to bring peace, be the good news to the poor. The poor in our own family first, in our country and in the world.

To be able to do this, our Sisters, our lives have to be woven with prayer. They have to be woven with Christ to be able to understand, to be able to share. Because today there is so much suffering — and I feel that the passion of Christ is being relived all over again — are we there to share that passion, to share that suffering of people. Around the world, not only in the poor countries, but I found the poverty of the West so much more difficult to remove. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread, I have satisfied. I have removed that hunger. But a person that is shut out, that feels

unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person that has been thrown out from society — that poverty is so hurtable and so much, and I find that very difficult. Our Sisters are working amongst that kind of people in the West. So you must pray for us that we may be able to be that good news, but we cannot do that without you, you have to do that here in your country. You must come to know the poor, maybe our people here have material things, everything, but I think that if we all look into our own homes, how difficult we find it sometimes to smile at each, other, and that the smile is the beginning of love.

And so let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love, and once we begin to love each other naturally we want to do something. So you pray for our Sisters and for me and for our Brothers, and for our Co-Workers that are around the world. That we may remain faithful to the gift of God, to love Him and serve Him in the poor together with you. What we have done we should not have been able to do if you did not share with your prayers, with your gifts, this continual giving. But I don't want you to give me from your abundance, I want that you give me until it hurts.

The other day I received 15 dollars from a man who has been on his back for twenty years, and the only part that he can move is his right hand. And the only companion that he enjoys is smoking. And he said to me: I do not smoke for one week, and I send you this money. It must have been a terrible sacrifice for him, but see how beautiful, how he shared, and with that money I bought bread and I gave to those who are hungry with a joy on both sides, he was giving and the poor were receiving. This is something that you and I — it is a gift of God to us to be able to share our love with others. And let it be as it was for Jesus. Let us love one another as he loved us. Let us love Him with undivided love. And the joy of loving Him and each other — let us give now — that Christmas is coming so close. Let us keep that joy of loving Jesus in our hearts. And share that joy with all that we come in touch with. And that radiating joy is real, for we have no reason not to be happy because we have no Christ with us. Christ in our hearts, Christ in the poor that we meet, Christ in the smile that we give and the smile that we receive. Let us make that one point: That no child will be unwanted, and also that we meet each other always with a smile, especially when it is difficult to smile.

I never forget some time ago about fourteen professors came from the United States from different universities. And they came to Calcutta to our house. Then we were talking about that they had been to the home for the dying. We have a home for the dying in Calcutta, where we have picked up more than 36,000 people only from the streets of Calcutta, and out of that big number more than 18,000 have died a beautiful death. They have just gone home to God; and they came to our house and we talked of love, of compassion, and then one of them asked me: Say, Mother, please tell us something that we will remember, and I said to them: Smile at each other, make time for each other in your family. Smile at each other. And then another one asked me: Are you married, and I said: Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at Jesus because he can be very demanding sometimes. This is really something true, and there is where love comes — when it is demanding, and yet we can give it to Him with joy. Just as I have said today, I have said that if I don't go to Heaven for anything else I will be going to Heaven for all the publicity because it has purified me and sacrificed me and made me really ready to go to Heaven. I think that this is something, that we must live life beautifully, we have Jesus with us and He loves us. If we could only remember that God loves me, and I have an opportunity to love others as he loves me, not in big things, but in small things with great love, then Norway becomes a nest of love. And how beautiful it will be that from here a centre for peace has been given. That from here the joy of life of the unborn child comes out. If you become a burning light in the world of peace, then really the Nobel Peace Prize is a gift of the Norwegian people. God bless you!"

— Source: catholiceducation.org

Mother Teresa's Letter to the US Supreme Court on Roe v. Wade:

Brief amicus curiae of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in support of petitioners' petitions for a writ of certiorari

George, Robert P

[We reprint here the complete text of the amicus curiae brief filed by Mother Teresa of Calcutta with the U.S. Supreme Court on February 14, 1994. The original title page is reproduced below.]

IN THE Supreme Court of the United States OCTOBER TERM, 1993

ALEXANDER LOCE,

Petitioner,

– against

THE STATE oF NEw JERSEY, Respondent.

TINA KRAIL, ET ALs.,

Petitioners,

– against

THE STATE oF NEw JERsEY,

Respondent.

INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE

Mother Teresa resides at 54 1A Ach. Jagdish, Ch. Bose Rd., Calcutta, India 700 016. She is the founder and mother superior of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity. The order maintains its headquarters in Calcutta, India. The Missionaries of Charity have provided services to the needy in many parts of the world, including the United States of America, where the order's main office is located at 335 East 145th Street in the Bronx, New York. Much of the work of the Missionaries of Charity involves providing charitable services to children and to poor

families. Through this work Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity have a special interest in the welfare of all children, born and unborn, and the familial relationship between children and their mothers and fathers.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The unborn child possesses an inalienable right to life which must be recognized and safeguarded by any just society.

ARGUMENT

1. THE QUESTION WHETHER UNBORN HUMAN BEINGS POSSESS THE INALIENABLE RIGHT TO LIFE IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE AND MUST NOT BE AVOIDED BY THE COURT.

I hope you will count it no presumption that I seek your leave to address you on behalf of the unborn child. Like that child I can be called an outsider. I am not an American citizen. My parents were Albanian. I was born before the First World War in a part of what was not yet, and is no longer, Yuglosavia. In many senses I know what it is like to be without a country. I also know what it is like to feel an adopted citizen of other lands. When I was still a girl I travelled to India. I found my work among the poor and sick of that nation, and I have lived there ever since.

Since 1950 I have worked with my many sisters from around the world as one of the Missionaries of Charity. Our congregation now has over 400 foundations in more than 100 countries, including the United States of America. We have almost 5,000 sisters. We care for those who are often treated as outsiders in their own communities by their own neighbors- the starving, the crippled, the impoverished, and the diseased, from the old woman with a brain tumor in Calcutta to the young man with AIDS in New York City. A special focus of our care are mothers and their children. This includes mothers who feel pressured to sacrifice their unborn children by want, neglect, despair, and philosophies and governmental policies which promote the dehumanization of inconvenient human life. And it includes the.children themselves, innocent and utterly defenseless, who are at the mercy of those who would deny

their humanity. So, in a sense, my sisters and those we serve are all outsiders together. At the same time, we are supremely conscious of the common bonds of humanity that unite us and transcend national boundaries.

In another sense no one in the world who prizes liberty and human rights can feel anything but a strong kinship with America. Yours is the one great nation in all of history which was founded on the precept of equal rights and respect for all humankind, for the poorest and weakest of us as well as the richest and strongest. As your Declaration of Independence put it in words which have never lost their power to stir the heart:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ….

A nation founded on these principles holds a sacred trust: to stand as an example to the rest of the world, to climb ever higher in its practical realization of the ideals of human dignity, brotherhood, and mutual respect. It has been your constant efforts in fulfillment of that mission, far more than your size or your wealth or your military might, that have made America an inspiration to all mankind.

It must be recognized that your model was never one of realized perfection, but of ceaseless aspiration. From the outset, for example, America denied the African slave his freedom and human dignity. But in time you righted that wrong, albeit at an incalculable cost in human suffering and loss of life. Your impetus has almost always been toward a fuller, more all-embracing conception and assurance of the rights which your founding fathers recognized as inherent and God-given. Yours has ever been an inclusive, not an exclusive society. And your steps, though they may have paused or faltered now and then, have been pointed in the right direction and have trod the right path. The task has not always been an easy one, and each new generation has faced its own challenges and tempations. But, in a uniquely courageous and inspiring way, America has kept faith.

Yet there has been one infinitely tragic and destructive departure from those American ideals in recent memory. It was this Court's own decision in 1973 to exclude the unborn child from the human family. Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973). You ruled that a mother, in consulation with her doctor, has broad discretion, guaranteed against infringement by the United States Constitution, to choose to destroy her unborn child. Your opinion stated that you did not need to "resolve the difficult question of when life begins." 410 U.S. at 159. That question is inescapable. If the right life is an inherent and inalienable right, it must surely obtain wherever human life exists. No one can deny that the unborn child is a distinct human being, that it is human, and that it is alive. It is unjust, therefore, to deprive the unborn child of its fundamental right to life on the basis of its age, size, or condition of dependency. It was a sad infidelity to America's highest ideals when this Court said it did not matter, or could not be determined, when the inalienable right to life began for a child in its mother's womb.

America needs no words from me to see how your decision in Roe v. Wade has deformed a great nation. The so-called right to abortion has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has sown violence and discord at the heart of the most intimate human relationships. It has aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts-a child-as a competitor, an intrusion, and an inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the independent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters. And, in granting this unconscionable power, it has exposed many women to unjust and selfish demands from their husbands or other sexual partners.

Human rights are not a privelige conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign. The Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany recently ruled:

The unborn child is entitled to its right to life independently of acceptance by its mother; this is an elementary and inalienable right which emanates from the dignity of the human being.

[Judgement of May 28, 1993, The Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany, Judgement of the Second Senate, 20 EuGRZ 229-275 (consolidated case nos. 2 BzF2/90m 2 BzF 5/92).]

Americans may feel justly proud that Germany in 1993 was able to recognize the sanctity of human life. You must weep that your own government, at present, seems blind to this truth.

I have no new teaching for America. I seek only to recall you to faithfulness to what you once taught the world. Your nation was founded on the propositionvery old as a moral precept, but startling and innovative as a political insight-that human life is a gift of immeasurable worth, and that it deserves, always and everywhere, to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

CONCLUSION

I urge the Court to take the opportunity presented by the petitions in these cases to consider the fundamental question of when human life begins and to declare without equivocation the inalienable rights which it possesses.

Respectfully submitted,

MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

ROBERT P. GEORGE, ESQ.

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— Source: findarticles.com

Beautification and Canonization Process:

Following Mother Teresa's death in 1997, the Holy See began the process of beautification, the second step towards possible canonization. This process requires the documentation of a miracle performed from the intercession of Mother Teresa. In 2002, the Vatican recognized as a miracle the healing of a tumor in the abdomen of an Indian woman, Monica Besra, following the application of a locket containing Mother Teresa's picture. Monica Besra said that a beam of light emanated from the picture, curing the cancerous tumor. It is claimed that some of Besra's medical staff and, initially, Besra's husband insisted that conventional medical treatment eradicated the tumor. An opposing perspective of the claim is that Monica's medical records contain sonograms, prescriptions, and physicians' notes that could conceivably prove whether the cure was a miracle or not. Monica has claimed Sister Betta of the Missionaries of Charity is holding them. The publication has received a "no comments" statement from Sister Betta. The officials at the Balurghat Hospital where Monica was seeking medical treatment are claiming that they are being pressured by the Catholic order to declare the cure as a miracle.

Christopher Hitchens was the only witness called by the Vatican to give evidence against Mother Teresa's beautification and canonization process, as the Vatican had abolished the traditional "devil's advocate" role, which fulfilled a similar purpose. Hitchens has argued that "her intention was not to help people", and he alleged that she lied to donors about the use of their contributions. "It was by talking to her that I discovered, and she assured me, that she wasn't working to alleviate poverty," says Hitchens. "She was working to expand the number of Catholics. She said, 'I'm not a social worker. I don't do it for this reason. I do it for Christ. I do it for the church.'" In the process of examining Teresa's suitability for beatification and canonization, the Roman Curia (the Vatican) pored over a great deal of documentation of published and unpublished criticisms against her life and work. Vatican officials say Hitchens' allegations have been investigated by the agency charged with such matters, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and they found no obstacle to Mother Teresa's beatification. Due to the attacks she has received, some Catholic writers have called her a sign of contradiction. The beatification of Mother Teresa took place on October 19, 2003, thereby bestowing on her the title "Blessed." Unless dispensed by the Pope, a second miracle is required for her to proceed to canonization.

— Source: wikipedia.org

In Her Own Words:

On poverty –

“I see God in every human being. When I wash the leper’s wounds, I feel I am nursing the Lord himself. Is it not a beautiful experience?” — 1974 interview.

“When I see waste here, I feel angry on the inside. I don’t approve of myself getting angry. But it’s something you can’t help after seeing Ethiopia.” — Washington 1984.

On the Nobel Peace Prize –

“I choose the poverty of our poor people. But I am grateful to receive (the Nobel) in the name of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, of the crippled, of the blind, of the lepers, of all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared-for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone.” — Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, 1979.

On retirement –

“God will find another person, more humble, more devoted, more obedient to him, and the society will go on.” — Calcutta 1989, after announcing her intention to retire.

“I was expecting to be free, but God has his own plans.” — Calcutta 1990, when the sisters of her order persuaded her to withdraw her resignation.

On war –

“I have never been in a war before, but I have seen famine and death. I was asking (myself), ‘What do they feel when they do this?’ I don’t understand it. They are all children of God.

Why do they do it? I don't understand." — Beirut 1982, during fighting between the Israeli army and Palestinian guerrillas.

"Please choose the way of peace. … In the short term there may be winners and losers in this war that we all dread. But that never can, nor never will justify the suffering, pain and loss of life your weapons will cause." — Letter to U.S. President George Bush and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, January 1991.

On abortion –

Abortion "is murder in the womb … A child is a gift of God. If you do not want him, give him to me."

On her life's work –

"The other day I dreamed that I was at the gates of heaven. And St. Peter said, 'Go back to Earth. There are no slums up here.'" — Quoted as telling Prince Michael of Greece in 1996.

On love –

We can do no great things; only small things with great love.

It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home. Bring love into your home for this is where our love for each other must start.

On life –

In the end, dear friend, it is always between us and God, not between us and them.

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