

A Fleeting Glimpse Of the Sublime

by Nina Ogden

A once young and vigorous Pope, now hobbled by age and illness, presided over the Beatification Mass of the woman he called the “Icon of the Good Samaritan . . . who experienced harsh spiritual suffering [which] led her to identify herself ever more with those she served every day.” Thus, people around the world experienced the beatification of Mother Teresa by Pope John Paul. The press emphasized his frailness, his inability to read the homily he had written. They emphasized the letters she had written about her fears of being abandoned by a sense of God’s presence, and her “dark night of the soul.”

For all the stories the media spins out about the manufactured conflict of right to life versus right to choose, little did they know that they had just experienced a fleeting glimpse of the sublime, in a celebration organized by that true evangelizer, Pope John Paul II. When they saw 3,000 of the poorest of the poor, who have been served by Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity, sitting in the most honored reserved section of the audience, they might have gotten the hint that they were getting a lesson in what this Pope calls “the civilization of love.”

‘A Slave of All’

Pope John Paul II began his homily for the Oct. 19 Beatification Mass for Mother Teresa of Calcutta with a reading from the Gospel of Mark, “Whoever would be the first among you must be a slave of all.” “It is the way,” the Pope said, “that Christ himself followed to the cross; a journey of love and service, which goes against all human logic. To be the slave of all! This is the logic that guided Mother Teresa of Calcutta, founder of the Missionaries of Charity, whom today I have the joy of inscribing in the register of the blessed. I am personally grateful to this courageous woman, whom I always felt near to me. Icon of the Good Samaritan, she went everywhere to serve Christ in the poorest of the poor. Not even conflicts and wars could succeed in stopping her.”

Toward the end of his homily, the Pope addressed the issue which is at the center of beatification. It is what the Fourth-Century African Bishop and Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine of Hippo, called “heroic virtue”—the ability to



Mother Teresa speaking in Washington in 1995. "Some people think miracles just happen," she told a Schiller Institute representative, "but you and I know they take very hard work."

make second nature, those qualities which are almost impossible for the average person. The Pope said: "Mother Teresa shared the passion of the Crucified One, in a special way, during long years of 'interior darkness.' That trial at times was piercing, which she accepted as a singular 'gift and privilege.' . . . This harsh spiritual suffering led her to identify herself ever more with those she served every day, experiencing pain and at times even rejection. . . . Like the Psalmist, how many times, in moments of interior desolation, Mother Teresa also repeated to her Lord: 'In you, in you I hope, my God.' "

Mother Teresa and the Schiller Institute

The work Mother Teresa did with the LaRouche movement was included in the Vatican's deliberations for her beatification. According to the precepts of the Church, a miracle must be verified for her to be Canonized; but, as Mother Teresa told this author shortly before she died, "Some people think miracles just happen, but you and I know they take very hard work."

In September 1994, Mother Teresa asked the Schiller Institute to produce and circulate a broadsheet at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt. The late Msgr. Robert Hupp, Director Emeritus of Boys Town in Nebraska, enabled this author to contact his friend Mother Teresa after he signed the Schiller Institute statement, "Stop the UN Killer Conference." The broadsheet she commissioned, which she asked to be given to every delegate at the Cairo conference, was entitled, "Whatsoever You Did Unto One of the Least of These, You Did Unto Me." It included this statement, which reflects her

characteristic spunkiness: "It is not enough for us to say: 'I love God,' but also I have to love my neighbor. St. John says, you are a liar if you say you love God and don't love your neighbor."

On July 22, 1997, less than two months before she died, Mother Teresa dictated a message to this author for the Schiller Institute in Leesburg, Virginia, from her sickbed in Calcutta. The message was to be recorded and hand delivered to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and then-Governor of Virginia George Allen, and publicized, in an effort to stop the execution of a prisoner on Virginia's death row. This tape recording, which was later given personally to Pope John Paul II, is reported to have been one of the key elements in the decision to change the doctrine of the Catholic Church on the death penalty, to one of unequivocal opposition. The message follows:

"Dear Governor Allen and Justice Scalia,

"I come before you today to appeal for the life of a man—Joseph Roger O'Dell. I do not know what he has done to be condemned to death. All I know is that he, too, is a child of God, created for greater things—to love and to be loved.

"I pray that Joseph is at peace with God, that he has said sorry to God and to whomever he has hurt. Let us not take away his life. Let us bring hope into his life and into all our lives. Jesus, who loves each one of us tenderly with mercy and compassion, works miracles of forgiveness.

"To you, dear Joseph, I say: Trust in God's tender love for you, and accept whatever God gives and give whatever God takes with a big smile.

"Let us pray. God Bless you.

"Mother Teresa MC"

Should we not follow the example of the morally tireless Pope John Paul II? He said, as he was ending his Mass for the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "Let us praise this little woman enamoured of God, humble messenger of the Gospel and tireless benefactor of humanity. We honor in her one of the most outstanding personalities of our time. Let us accept her message and follow her example."

— FOR A —
DIALOGUE OF CULTURES
www.schillerinstitute.org