

## A saintly woman

The "angel" of Calcutta, founder of the Society of the Missionaries of Charity, and winner of the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, Mother Teresa was the featured speaker at Class Day exercises Wednesday afternoon in Tercentenary Theatre. She spoke out strongly against abortion and premarital sex and in favor of prayer.

She began by praying that the new graduates would "go into the world with Jesus, to work for Jesus, and to serve Him in the distressing disguise of the

poor." She went on to say, "It is something unbelievable that today a mother, herself, murders her own child, afraid of having to feed one more child, afraid to educate one more child. This is one of the greatest poverties. A nation, people, family that allows that, that accepts that, they are the poorest of the poor."

Virginity is "the most beautiful thing a young man and a young woman can give each other. Make a resolution," she told her youthful listeners, "that on your wedding day you can give each other something beautiful." But, she said, "if a mistake has been made, have

the courage to accept the child. Do not destroy it. That sin is a murder."

Mother Teresa spoke with an almost mesmerizing conviction; her excellent English had an accent and cadence compounded of her native Yugoslavia and India. What she said struck many listeners as anomalous in Harvard Yard on Class Day, but she received a long, standing ovation from the unusually large crowd come to hear a saintly woman. The senior class had asked Mother Teresa to speak after invitations had been declined, reportedly, by actor Alan Alda and Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

## Exit, jesting: "We will take with us an ability to laugh at ourselves"

George Melrod '82 gave this year's Ivy Oration at Class Day exercises. "Next year," he said, "it will be called the Brick Wall Oration."\*

Melrod began "by noting what a pleasure it is to speak before so many powerful people who have the capacity to offer me a job when I graduate."

He went on: "Everyone is urged to return tomorrow for the traditional series of speeches which nobody understands. There will be a Greek oration and a Latin oration. Then there will be a Norwegian oration. Following that will be an oration given by a troupe of mimes. Last, there's an oration given in a pitch so high that only a dog can hear it."

"President Bok has a contract with the Harvard University Press to publish a volume of his most exciting speeches," Melrod told his listeners. "Amazingly, with the new microchip technology, that volume fits inside the head of a pin. In fact, *without* the new microchip technology, that volume fits inside the head of a pin."

Melrod also told his listeners:

"Most of us see graduation not so much as a ritualistic passage to the responsibilities of adulthood as a time to collect sizable checks from members of our immediate family."

"There are certain aspects of Harvard that parents can't see during their short stay here. For example, I had quite a cockroach problem during my four years. I won't say they were large, although a couple of them did have gun turrets and Soviet insignias."

"This year witnessed final approval of the new Fogg [Museum] extension.

There was a point when things were very uncertain, when the Fogg was desperately reaching out for tourist money, selling little plastic Sistine Chapels which you shake up and watch the snow swirl around inside, and three-dimensional postcards of the Mona Lisa winking at you. In fact, had the money not come through, they had plans to convert the building to the Fogg Art Museum and Dolphin Show."

"The administration, as you know, is removing the ivy from the walls. Other aspects of this de-beautification program: the colorful cupolas will be removed from the river Houses, and all the prettiest girls on campus will be required to wear drab, unflattering blouses and crop their hair in unappealing styles."

"The most important thing to a student is that mysterious Harvard experience. Who can forget that romantic moonlight swim in the Charles, and having your stomach pumped later that night? Then laughing about it over breakfast, and having your stomach pumped later in the day."

"Then there's the diversity of the Houses: Kirkland, strong; Adams, intelligent; Eliot, as intelligent as Adams but not quite as strong as Kirkland; Lowell, stronger than Adams but a little bit less strong than Eliot and a lot less friendly than Winthrop. I've heard some good things about North House, but I simply haven't been up there since the Braniff air shuttle to the Quad ceased operations in February."

"At times we struggled. In one class I got a 23 on the final and was upset about it, especially after the teacher informed me it was being graded on a scale of one to a million."

"And then there are final clubs, places where socially immature, if wealthy, young men will be encouraged to remain that way for the rest of their lives."

"What will we take with us when we do leave Harvard? Many of us will take with us a several-thousand-dollar debt in student loans. What is more, we will take with us cynicism, morality, determination, and an ability to use fancy catch phrases like cynicism, morality, determination. We will take with us an ability to laugh at ourselves. We will take with us an ability to laugh at those clumsier and more awkward than ourselves. We will take with us a certain *joie de vivre*. We will take with us a certain *soupes de jours*."

"As I look out over these young faces, so eager for the speech to end, I am reminded how little it is that we get what we want in life. At graduation, we shall at last go our separate ways. Some of us will be successful, pursuing careers in law, medicine, business, plumbing. Some of us will be confused, pursuing careers in large vegetable suits or treader uniforms."

"When I first came to this school, I had nothing but a gleam of hope in my eye, a nickel in my pocket, and a check for \$45,000. Today, I've still got that nickel."

Dana Warren and Wayne Meisel, first marshals of the Class of '82, offered welcoming and closing remarks at Class Day exercises. Michael R. Mills and Elizabeth D. Kalodner gave the Harvard and Radcliffe orations. The Ames Awards for outstanding character went to Debra L. Allgood and Donald H. Gips.

\*See page 96.