

our decline as a civilization is proceeding at a faster collapsing rate than I had ever assumed.

When I would think Richard Morris, who claims to be a Republican, would ponder, is what was read in the homily and in the Gospel at Lincoln Heath Air Force Base where I went to mass Sunday.

First it says in the epistle, Peter's letter to the Romans, do not conform yourself to this age. Romans 12, verses 1, 2. And then the gospel, this last Sunday, Matthew 16, 21 to 27, whoever would save his life in this world, will lose it. But whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

This is Jesus speaking.

What profit would a man show if he were to gain the whole world and ruin himself in the process? Even getting a book contract. What can a man offer in exchange for this very self?

I like the old translation, what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

The Son of Man will come with His father's glory accompanied by His angels, and when He does, he will repay each man according to his conduct.

My advice for the Morrisises would be to disappear into a retreat, a decent obscurity; forget the lousy book contract, and try and rebuild your life again with some dignity.

For our voters across this country, I would tell them this, and I am going to say it over and over in the next 3 weeks with as many special orders as I can get: Mr. Speaker, November the 5th is not just an IQ test for every voter in this Nation who bothers to go to the polls. It is a morality test. If you do not vote for Dole and Kemp, you flunk a morality test in this United States of America in the year of our Lord 1996, and you flunk the IQ test too.

ISSUES CONFRONTING CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a series of issues this afternoon. Last month we watched the Republican Convention, and Bob Dole called it a success. I think that convention was probably more remarkable for what was not said than what was said. In 4 days' time, there was no mention of the Contract on America; there was no mention of the Gingrich revolution; there was no mention of the freshman class.

Mr. Speaker, from what I could tell, the Speaker himself spent the convention in the witness protection program. He was not available, he was not seen.

Four years ago the Republicans said "Read our lips." Two years ago they said "Read our contract." This year they said, "Please don't read our program."

The Republican platform was written by the folks who put together what we

have been arguing about rather vociferously over the past, oh, I would say a year and a half, the same folks that put together the Medicare cutting and the education slashing and the Medicaid dicing and the environmental chopping program that we have been trying to repel here in the Congress.

Now, my colleagues may not want to talk about it, but we remember and the American people remember, they remember Medicare, they remember the Speaker saying he wants Medicare to wither on the vine. They remember my friend DICK ARMEY saying Medicare was a program he would have no part of in a free world. They remember Bob Dole bragging about his vote against Medicare back in 1965.

The Gingrich think tank newsletter, which was issued, the first one I believe, volume 1 of that newsletter, had this banner headline: "For freedom's sake, eliminate Social Security." I will repeat that again. Mr. GINGRICH's own think tank in their first, I believe it was their first, newsletter that they published had this headline in their newsletter: "For freedom's sake, eliminate Social Security."

So you not only have an attack on Medicare, we have an attack on Social Security.

Now, what is so devastating about this is that we are talking about programs that affect a portion of our population, a rather huge portion of our population, that is on a fixed income. I quite frankly did not realize how fixed that income was until a study was released by the Department of Labor that showed that 60 percent of the seniors in this country have incomes of \$10,000 a year or less. That includes their Social Security and any annuity that they may have.

That is quite remarkable, when you think that that large a segment of the American population with that relatively meager income would be the target on two of the programs that provide the foundation for their income, Social Security and Medicare, of our new Republican majority.

Senior citizens will remember, Mr. Speaker, the fact that they were arrested when they came here to protest cuts in Medicare. They were arrested in this Capitol. Two hundred seventy billion dollar cut in Medicare, they will remember that, in order to take that, put it in the pot, and use it for tax breaks that primarily went to the wealthiest individuals and corporations in our society.

They will remember the double premiums, the raiding on nursing homes and those regulations that were established to get rid of the abuses in nursing homes in our society, and doing away with that entirely in the budget bill that my colleagues on this side of the aisle presented to us.

I will say also that the American people will remember the cuts in education, the biggest cuts in the history of this country in education. Tens of thousands of kids, they tried to kick

off student loans. One million kids kicked off math and reading programs; 48,000 kicked off Head Start; 23 million kids eliminated from the DARE Program and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. That is the program that teaches our kids to say no to drugs, to say no to gang violence. It teaches them the values that are necessary for them to lead a healthy and productive life as children and as adolescents.

All of these things were attacked, and we stood up, we said no. The President said no and vetoed these bills. We had the support of enough Members to make sure that those vetoes were not overridden. So I think the American people are going to well remember the rather sorry and, if I may take it a step further, pathetic record of this Congress with respect to education. The seniors will certainly remember this Congress, this Republican-led Congress' efforts with regard to Medicare and Medicaid.

And if you are interested in the environment, which is the future, it is what we have, what we really have borrowed, we have no right to despoil, that we pass on to our children and grandchildren, hopefully in the form of clean air and clean water and unspoiled lands, the American people are going to remember this Congress going after the environment. Twenty-five percent cut to the environmental protection in this Congress in their budget bill; efforts to stop EPA enforcement and Superfund cleanup; efforts to stop going ahead with safe drinking water programs.

We have drinking water problems all over the country now. In this city it is not recommended that you drink out of the tap. There are places all over the country where that is the case because the water is not safe. The reason it is not safe is because parasites are getting into the system, parasites like cryptosporidium that got into the drinking water system in Milwaukee. One hundred four people were killed because of that; 400 became seriously ill.

These problems are about us around the country, and we need to do something to upgrade these systems. They do not last forever. Once you build them, there are no assurances that that road or bridge or sewer system or water system is going to be there. You have to maintain it. You have to refurbish it. You have to replace it.

But what happened in this Republican-led Congress? They voted to slash the funding to do those things, to stop raw sewage dumped into our drinking water, which is a big problem in my own area. We have been working to make sure that Lake St. Clair, which is the lifeblood of the Metropolitan Detroit Area with respect to water and fishing and recreation and many other things, is severely ill. We are trying to upgrade the sewage systems in the Metropolitan Detroit Area to make sure that that lake survives and is used in the productive way that it has historically been used.

But they voted to cut the sewer grant money. I have a community in Marysville up in my district, St. Clair County, a huge multimillion dollar grant, would have been slashed, done away with, had their proposal gone into effect. So local sewage projects have been frozen.

Of course, we are going to remember families because of the raid that they allowed, the Republican Congress, on pensions, allowed corporations to go in and raid pension funds of employees. That is not their money. That is the money of the employees. They worked for that money, they earned that money, and they have every right to expect when they retire that those pension dollars are going to be there for them, not siphoned off by some corporate heads to pay for expansion overseas, where their jobs are going to eventually go, or pay for increased salaries of their executives. Executive salaries already in this country have reached levels proportionate to the average worker salaries that are reaching really obscene levels.

Back in the 1960's, the average CEO's salary was about 12 times more than the average worker. It steadily climbed until today it is 187 times more than the average worker. If you go to the top 30 corporations in America, it is 225 times more.

And what do they want to do? They want to get in there and take the pension money of people who have worked and struggled to put together a life for themselves once they retire. It is one of the worst, inhumane, cruel things you can do to a person and a family.

□ 1700

There are people who work every day who take a good part of that day while they are working daydreaming about the day that they can retire, enjoy themselves, take a little trip with their family, work in the yard. I do not know about my colleagues, but I have too often faced case work in my district where an individual will wake up and the company is gone and their pension is gone with them, just vanished. Or this example: They find a little note in their mailbox that says, well, because your health insurance premiums have increased so much, we are going to deduct that from your pension.

So they end up with virtually no pension in order to cover the cost of their health premiums. It goes on every day in this country. It affects literally thousands and thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. And this Congress wanted to allow corporations to come in and continue the raid on workers' pensions.

I think it is important to remember this Congress shut down the Government twice, shut it down. I remember colleagues coming down on this side of the aisle into this well before these microphones saying, let us shut it down, let us shut it down; not understanding that there are some functions that the Government has to do: road

service, police protection, military service, things that are important to the functioning of the country. Yet, they came down here and closed the Government twice.

Of course, they tried mightily to block the minimum wage. We brought the minimum wage to the floor five times to get a vote to take it up, and we were rejected each and every time. But do you know what? On each vote we got a little closer to a majority. They finally realized over there that this is going to pass. They figured out that the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] and his motions were eventually going to get enough votes, and they were going to be left in the short.

So, after blocking and delaying and ducking for over a year, they finally brought the bill to the floor. We passed actually a pretty good bill. I might add that my colleagues on this side of the aisle added some very good provisions with respect to small business that I think added to that bill and made it more acceptable and workable for the small business community. I applaud them for that action. But it took almost 1½ years to get that done because they just do not understand or sense or feel the agony of having to work for \$4.25 an hour. You cannot raise a family on \$4.25 an hour. That is less than \$8,500 a year. What happens when people make \$4.25 an hour? They end up working two jobs, three jobs, a lot of overtime.

When they do that, they are not home when their kids get home from school. They are not there to teach them right from wrong. Father is not there for little league or soccer practice. He is not there for dinner conversations. Then the whole fabric of civil society starts to unravel and the social pathologies, delinquencies, gang violence, drugs, all these things get manifested and blown up to the point where they become serious social problems in our society.

So the minimum wage, while it may seem simple and it may not affect a lot of people, it affected 10 million people, most of them adults, about 66 percent of those adults and most of those women with children. It was important because it was a symbol that this Congress wanted to say that, when you work, you ought to be rewarded for your work and that work was better than welfare.

As we move people off welfare, we have got to be able to pay them decent wages so they can maintain themselves and their families. But our colleagues on this side of the aisle spent a good part of the year deciding that was not going to happen.

Of course, the Republican leadership on this side of the aisle eventually voted against the minimum wage altogether at the end anyway. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] voted against it, the majority leader. He said he would fight it with every fiber of his being and he did. He lost, but he voted against it at the end.

I suspect we should commend him for it, because he lived up to his word; but it was not with his help that we were able to provide an \$1,800 increase in salary a year for these 10 million American workers who need it in order to raise their families and live a decent life. It is still too low, but we made some efforts to increase it for the first time in 40 years. I think those folks who supported that ought to feel good about that. The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER], the caucus leader, the conference leader in the Republican Party, he voted against it. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], their No. 3 person, the whip voted against it.

So as we get ready to wrap up this Congress, and we are coming very close to that, Mr. Speaker, we probably have a couple, 3 weeks left here. I must say it has been quite a disappointment. But we have been able to withstand a lot of the onslaught by the Republican majority on the Medicare front, the Medicaid front, education, the environment, and some of these worker issues. But the people will speak, as they do every 2 years. They will have the opportunity to make a judgment on whether they approve of the work of this Congress or whether they do not approve of the work of this Congress.

I am anxious to take this case to the American people and to my district. I think what we have seen in this Congress is a squandering of a lot of valuable time to deal with the issues that people really care about, the issues that folks talk about around the kitchen table.

What do they talk about? Do they talk about, as the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] said last night on the House floor, proxy voting? Is that important for the American people? He got up here and made a little speech last night about how proud he was of getting rid of proxy voting. I agreed with him, I supported that. But that is not what people talk about.

What they talk about is pensions. They talk about how they are going to afford to get an education for their kids to go to college. They talk about whether their drinking water is safe. They talk about what kind of job and what protections they have on their job. They talk about things that affect them on a daily basis.

What they want is an opportunity to be successful, and what we need to do is provide them the opportunity so they can be successful themselves, not have to worry about that pension going kerplow on them after 20 or 30 years of work. We ought to make pensions portable, that is what we ought to be doing instead of letting corporations come in and raid pensions.

Mr. Speaker, we ought to make it portable so that if you move from this job one year to another job, you carry your pension with you and it builds up. It is an easy thing to do. It is not that complicated. But that is what we ought to be focusing on. We ought to be focusing on the opportunities for their

children to go to college. It is expensive to go to college, anywhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year if you are going away. Some places it is as high as \$20,000 and \$25,000. Those families cannot afford that.

What are we doing about it? What we ought to be doing, as the President has suggested and we have suggested, is providing about a \$10,000 tax deduction for these families to send their kids to school. That would help. That is something that they could get excited about.

And leave those student loans alone. They are there for a reason. They work. Education is the best investment we can make in this country. It has historically been so. In my lifetime it started after the Second World War with the GI bill. They made a huge difference in the human resource potential and capability of this country.

The National Defense Act that occurred a decade or so later made a big difference. So we put student loans into effect so students could afford to go to school without having to pay exorbitant interest rates once they left school. Now in this Congress an attempt to roll back student loans. I guess what irritates me about that is a lot of the newer Members on the Republican side of the aisle got through college on student loans. PHIL GRAMM got through school on students loans. NEWT GINGRICH got through college on student loans. In fact if it was not for student loans they would not be where they are today, which is the only good reason from my perspective to be against student loans. A little joke, but nonetheless, they want to pull the ladder up now and not let anyone else climb it.

That is not the way I think the country ought to operate. We work best when we pull together as a community, each helping one another, making opportunities for each other, not alone, not as rugged individualists, but working as a community. It is what really is great about America, the sense of community, going into neighborhoods across this country and watching all the activities that occur.

George Bush was absolutely right. Maybe he did not use the best phrase, but remember when he said he was excited about this thing called 1,000 points of light. I thought it was a pretty good phrase, but a lot of people made fun of it. What he was talking about was community. He was talking about folks coming together at the PTA, the little league, the ethnic clubs, the sports groups, the folks that work the Habitat for Humanity crowd, all these different organizations out there doing things, giving to the community, giving to others, being creative, the Rotary, the Lions, the religious organizations. It is really what this is all about. It is pulling together, people pulling together, not individuals doing it on their own.

It takes a community today to raise a child. It starts in the home. It starts

with the parents. Of course, they are the core, but it takes more than that. It takes safe streets, it takes good schools. It takes great teachers. It takes a lot of things to make this work. We have got to get back to that. We have got to get back to that.

In conclusion, let me just say, Mr. Speaker, I hope that this next Congress, whomever is in charge, and I hope it is us, but we will find out in about 2 months, will adopt this sense of community and this spirit that has brought us forward over these past 200 years in this country, because it really is what is at the heart of America.

If we do that again, I think we will hopefully become a more collegial body and work together to talk about the issues that are so important to the American people, the things they talk about at the kitchen table, at the picnic table, the things that are really important to them, and get away from this whole notion that the world revolves around line item vetoes or proxy voting or unfunded mandates.

I mean, some of these things may procedurally be important to do, but really, it is not really where folks want us to laser in on their problems. They want us to focus in on the things that they care about: their education, their pensions, their health care, their wages. Those are the things that matter. And their families, their families, making sure that the family works together, stays together, operates as a unit.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I wish you a good evening.

FIGHTING CRIME TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN DREAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. CHRISTENSEN] is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, during the month of August, I had the opportunity to spend some quality time with my fellow Nebraskans. During that month I knocked on over 3,500 doors and discovered that, willing or not, people are beginning to focus on the elections just 61 days away now.

The November elections are going to be very historic for, as a nation, we are poised to get ready for the 21st century, where we will set the course for flagship America and where that course will go into many uncharted waters.

This November, we are going to be selecting a helmsman to lead our Nation into the next century to steer that Nation, to steer our Nation on a safe and steady course. This November, we will decide whether to elect the reform Congress, one that I believe has accomplished more in over a generation than any other Congress, or return to the status quo of higher taxes, bigger Government, bloated bureaucracy, unprecedented arrogance that came with 40 years of one-party Democratic rule.

I heard the former speaker talk about the fact that it takes a village to raise a child. It does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a parent. It takes two parents. It takes people that care about a child to raise that child up right.

I think that is what this November election is going to be about: restoring the American dream for that child. To each of us it means a little bit different. To some it means going to college. To others it might mean owning a home. To others it might mean being an entrepreneur and starting your own business. It means getting married to some and starting a family.

□ 1715

As a Member of Congress I believe that the American dream has got to be centered around a few very core issues. One is balancing this country's budget to begin to pay off the \$5 trillion worth of debt that hangs around our children's necks, to give them an opportunity to live in a debt-free society full of opportunity, opportunity awaiting them in the 21st century. Restoring the American dream means freeing Flagship America of the anchor of taxes and regulation and letting working families keep more of their hard-earned money and providing better opportunity for them all. Restoring the American dream means streets where seniors can stroll safely into the night and schools where children can learn without fear for their life and fear walking to school in the morning without their parent beside them.

And that is what I would like to talk with you about this evening, the violent crime and illegal drugs that are casting a long cold shadow over the American dream, for without safe streets, secure schoolyards and a drug-free future, no other element of the American dream is possible. We must have safe streets, secure schools, and a freedom from the fear for us to accomplish that American dream. I believe this is possible, and I believe we can achieve it.

You know, in Nebraska we are very fortunate. Generally we have been spared the worst of crime. The crime and horror stories that are played out on the TV screens which you see in Chicago and Los Angeles and Houston and New York does not normally happen in Omaha, but sadly that is no longer true. You know, I grew up in the rural part of Nebraska. I can remember when we left our door unlocked and the keys in the pickup. But no longer can you do that. In Omaha last year alone we had 41 killings, 8 more than in 1994. Omaha's police arrested 20 percent more juveniles in 1995 than they did in 1994. And that shadow, the shadow of crime, even took one of our brave men in blue.

You know, two studies have been released most recently that show that we are losing the war on drugs. The Health and Human Services study showed that drug abuse is climbing