

leaves the civilian population to bear the tragic consequences. Only honest dialogue, a real concern for the good of people and respect for the international order can lead to solutions befitting a region where our religious traditions are rooted. If violence is often contagious, peace can be so too, and I am sure that a stable Middle East would contribute effectively to restoring hope to many peoples. I am thinking for example of the suffering peoples of Algeria and of the island of Cyprus, where the situation is still in deadlock.

Some months ago Sri Lanka celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of independence, but unfortunately it is still today divided by ethnic struggles which have delayed the opening of serious negotiations, which alone are the only way to peace.

*Africa* remains a continent at risk. Of its fifty-three States, seventeen are experiencing military conflicts, either internally or with other States. I am thinking in particular of Sudan where, in addition a cruel war, a terrible human tragedy is unfolding; Eritrea and Ethiopia which are once again in dispute; and Sierra Leone, where the people are still the victims of merciless struggles. On this great continent there are up to eight million refugees and displaced persons practically abandoned to their fate. The countries of the Great Lakes region still bear open wounds resulting from the excesses of ethnocentrism, and they are struggling amid poverty and insecurity; this is also the case in Rwanda and Burundi, where an embargo is further aggravating the situation. The Democratic Republic of Congo still has far to go in working out its transition and experiencing the stability to which its people legitimately aspire, as the massacres which recently occurred at the very beginning of the year near the town of Uvira testify. Angola remains in search of a peace which cannot be found and in these days is experiencing a development which causes great concern and which has not spared the Catholic Church. The reports regularly coming to me from these tormented regions confirm my conviction that war is always destructive of our humanity, and that peace is undoubtedly the pre-condition for human rights. To all these peoples, who often send me pleas for help, I wish to give the assurance that I am close to them. May they know also that the Holy See is sparing no effort to bring about an end to their sufferings and to find equitable solutions to the existing serious problems, on both the political and humanitarian levels.

The culture of peace is still being thwarted by the *legitimation and use of armed force for political purposes*. The nuclear tests recently carried out in Asia and the efforts of other countries quietly working on establishing their nuclear power could very well lead to a gradual spread of nuclear arms and consequently to a massive re-armament which would greatly hinder the praiseworthy efforts being made on behalf of peace. This would frustrate all policies aimed at preventing conflicts.

There is also *the production of less costly weaponry*, like anti-personnel mines, happily outlawed by the Ottawa Convention of December 1997 (which the Holy See hastened to ratify last year), and small-calibre arms, to which, I believe, political leaders should pay greater attention in order to control their deadly effects. Regional conflicts, in which children are frequently recruited for combat, indoctrinated and incited to kill, call for a serious examination of conscience and a concerted response.

Finally, the risks to peace arising from *social inequalities and artificial economic growth* cannot be underestimated. The financial crisis which has shaken Asia has shown the extent to which economic security is com-

parable to political and military security, inasmuch as it calls for openness, concerted action and respect for specific ethical principles.

In the face of these problems which are familiar to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to share with you a conviction which I firmly hold: *during this final year before the year 2000 an awakening of consciences is essential*.

Never before have the members of the international community had at their disposal a body of such precise and complete norms and conventions. What is lacking is the will to respect and apply them. I pointed this out in my Message of 1 January, in speaking of human rights: "When the violation of any fundamental human right is accepted without reaction, all other rights are placed at risk" (No. 12). It seems to me that this truth needs to be seen in relation to all juridic norms. *International law cannot be the law of the stronger*, nor that of a simple majority of States, nor even that of an international organization. It must be the law which is in conformity with the principles of the natural law and of the moral law, which are always binding upon parties in conflict and in the various questions in dispute.

*The Catholic Church*, as also communities of believers in general, will always be on the side of those who strive to *make the supreme good of law prevail over all other considerations*. It is likewise necessary for believers to be able to make themselves heard and to take part in public dialogue in the societies of which they are full members. This leads me to share with you, as the official representatives of your States, *my painful concern about the all too numerous violations of religious freedom in today's world*.

Just recently, for example, *in Asia*, episodes of violence have caused tragic suffering to the Catholic community: churches have been destroyed, religious personnel have been mistreated and even murdered. Other regrettable events could be mentioned in several African countries. In other regions, *where Islam is the majority religion*, one still has to deplore the grave forms of discrimination of which the followers of other religions are victims. There is even one country where Christian worship is totally forbidden and where possession of a Bible is a crime punishable by law. This is all the more distressing because, in many cases, Christians have made a great contribution to the development of these countries, especially in the area of education and health care. In certain countries in *Western Europe*, one notes an equally disturbing development which, under the influence of a false idea of the principle of separation between the State and the Churches or as a result of a deep-seated agnosticism, tends to confine the Churches within the religious sphere alone and finds it difficult to accept public statements from them. Finally, some countries of *Central and Eastern Europe* have great difficulty in acknowledging the religious pluralism proper to democratic societies and attempt to limit, by means of a restrictive and petty bureaucratic practice, the freedom of conscience and of religion which their Constitutions solemnly proclaim.

As I recall religious persecutions either long past or more recent, I believe that the time has come, at the end of *this century*, to ensure that everywhere in the world the right conditions for effective freedom of religion are guaranteed. This requires, on the one hand, that each believer should recognize in others something of the universal love which God has for his creatures. It requires, on the other hand, that the public authorities also—called by vocation to think in universal terms—should come to accept the religious dimension of their fellow citizens along with its necessary community expres-

sion. In order to bring this about, we have before us not only the lessons of history, but also certain valuable juridical instruments which only need to be applied. In a certain sense, *the future of societies depends on the inescapable relationship between God and the Earthly City*, for, as I stated during my visit to the seat of the European Parliament on 11 October 1988: "Wherever man no longer relies on the great reality that transcends him, he risks handing himself over to the uncontrollable power of the arbitrary and to pseudo-absolutes that destroy him" (No. 10).

These are some of the thoughts which have come to my mind and heart as I look at the world of this century which is coming to a close. If God in sending his Son among us took such interest in mankind, let us act in such a way as to correspond to such great love! He, the Father of all, has made with each of us a covenant which nothing can break. By telling us and by showing us that he loves us, he also gives us the hope that we can live in peace; and it is true that only the person who knows love can love in return. It is good that *all people should discover this Love which precedes them and awaits them*. Such is my dearest wish, for each of you and for all the peoples of the earth!

## JEREMY AND JULIA'S LAW

### HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because an increasing number of moms and dads have to take their loved ones to day care while they go off to work. The time is right for me to introduce a new bill, Jeremy and Julia's Law. This bill has two parts: (1) A misdemeanor for a person who misrepresents intentionally the credentials of the day care provider or the conditions of the care provided, and; (2) A felony for a person who causes serious physical injury to a child under his care. This bill gives parents the peace of mind knowing that their children are safe and secure while being cared for by responsible, reliable, licensed, professional day care professionals.

Last July in Albany, New York, a couple left their three-month-old daughter, Julia, in the care of a licensed, in-home day care provider. The provider lied about the number of children for whom she cared on a daily basis. Julia had been placed in a swing and left unattended. The baby was not supervised for twenty minutes. During that time, Julia threw up her food and choked on her own vomit. She was rushed to a local hospital, placed on life support, and tragically she was diagnosed as brain dead.

The critical fact in this horrible story is that the day care provider lied. She told Julia's parents that she was caring for four children. An official investigation discovered that eight children were under her care.

I must tell you another tragic story. Last January, three-month-old Jeremy Fiedelholz was being care for by a licensed, in-home day care operator. His parents left Jeremy with the professional for two hours. It was a trial run; the parents were deciding if this day care professional was one they could trust. When the Fiedelholz' returned, they found Jeremy face down in a crib, in a pool of his own vomit, dead. The state of Florida had licensed this facility to care for six children, but this woman

had taken in 13 children that day. On the day that Jeremy died, while the owner ran errands, all 13 children were left at the mercy of a poorly trained staff person who was not CPR certified. The provider had lied to Jeremy's parents.

The circumstances surrounding the deaths of these two infants are frighteningly similar. In both cases, the day care provider misrepresented to parents about the number of children who would be accepted daily, who would be responsible for caring for the child, and the qualifications of the person who would care for the child. Two children died after the day care professional misrepresented the conditions of care being provided. In both cases, the only recourse for the parents was in civil court. No federal or state criminal law applied. Under my bill, a crime will be committed if a day care provider intentionally misrepresents: (1) Credentials, licenses or permits that the provider or the staff possesses; (2) Number of children for whom they care, or; (3) Quality of the day care facilities.

Most states do not have adequate criminal laws in this arena. In many states, there are standards but they are not consistently enforced. Critical gaps that would safeguard the basic health and safety standards for child care exist. For example, many states do not require small, in-home day care providers to apply for a license. Those providers are not inspected. Even when states require in-home providers to be licensed, most of the time there are no inspections.

Today, millions of parents have no choice. They must make ends meet to pay the bills. So, they are forced to place their loved ones in child care while they work. Currently, 77

percent of all women with children under the age of 17 hold a job. Each day, about 13 million children under the age of six spend part of their day in day care. There are six million infants and toddlers who are being cared for by people that parents are hoping they can trust.

Every parent wants to feel secure in knowing their loved ones are receiving quality day care. Quality care means providing a safe and healthy environment where care gives safeguard infants and nurture their development. Quality care means having a maximum number of children for each care giver. The best of all worlds means every child in day care receives as much one-on-one attention as possible. This bill gives moms and dads what they deserve—the peace of mind that goes with knowing their children are safe and secure and in the arms of a day care professional.

Jeremy and Julia's Law is a fair bill. Prosecutors will be allowed to pursue day care providers that deliberately break the law. Parents will see justice done when their child is seriously injured or dies. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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WHAT WILL POSTERITY SAY  
ABOUT THE PETTINESS

**HON. MAJOR R. OWENS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 2, 1999*

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, first the impeachment debate; and now the trial in the Senate, have provided the American people

with graphic examples of government descending into dangerous pettiness. The House Managers or prosecutors have behaved like zealous persecutors. Beyond Kenneth Starr's forty million dollars already spent, they propose to paralyze the nation's decision-making process for an indefinite time period. Issues such as school construction and the minimum wage increase will get scant attention while we drag witnesses in for more Peyton Place depositions. Mice minds have hijacked the government machinery of a great nation. The situation may be summarized in the following RAP poem:

PROFILE OF THE PERSECUTING PROSECUTORS

Mice men gnawing  
At the Core of the Nation  
History will rate them  
The pompous petty generation  
Rodents feeding  
On the Monica sensation  
Eloquent enemies  
Of issue liberation  
Filibuster babies  
Babbling in their bubbles  
Mischievous teenie boppers  
Making monumental troubles  
Nice men guffawing  
Mice men gnawing  
Franklin's wisdom dies  
Madison closes his eyes  
Rodents raiding Hamilton  
Jumping over Jefferson  
Boasting bloody fangs  
Pompous petty generation  
Bloated on Monica sensation  
Perfumed urination  
Decorated defecation  
Mice men gnawing  
On the heart of the nation.