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Don't praise Mother Teresa — be ashamed, Libertarian Party tells U.S. politicians

What's the difference between a truly moral person and a politician?

WASHINGTON, DC — Politicians shouldn't praise the memory of Mother Teresa — instead, her life and good works should make politicians embarrassed and ashamed, the Libertarian Party said today.

"The life of Mother Teresa was a silent rebuke to everything politicians stand for," said the party's national chairman, Steve Dasbach. "For politicians to capitalize on her death with flowery praise is ghoulish hypocrisy."

The tiny, Nobel Peace Prize-winning nun died on Friday at age 87, and will be buried Saturday in Calcutta, India. No sooner had the announcement of her death been made than President Bill Clinton memorialized her as "an incredible person" who showed "how we can make real our dreams for a just and good society."

But Clinton and other political eulogizers miss the central point of Mother Teresa's life, Dasbach said. "Mother Teresa reached into our *hearts* while politicians reach into our *wallets*. She never once *demande*d that people help her; she humbly *asked* them. That's why she was loved the world over.

"Imagine how different her legacy would be if she had relied on the coercive power of taxation, rather than the uplifting power of private charity."

And although American politicians claim their goal is the same as Mother Teresa's — helping the poor — the contrast between them is stark, he said.

"Compare Mother Teresa to American politicians," said Dasbach. "Mother Teresa kissed the hands of dying lepers; she washed her own clothes by hand; she slept on a thin mattress; and she picked maggots from the wounds of Calcutta's homeless.

"By contrast, politicians make speeches in the air-conditioned luxury of the Capitol Building; they attend \$5,000-a-plate dinners; and they spend other people's money on political causes that will get them re-elected," he said.

That's why Americans instinctively see the difference between a truly moral person like Mother Teresa — and a typical Washington politician, he said.

"Americans understand that true, moral charity can't be achieved at the point of a gun," said Dasbach. "Maybe that's why American politicians are held in such contempt, while Mother Teresa was revered by hundreds of millions of people."

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