His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's Address

Salve Regina University

November 17th, 2005

Governor Carcieri, Bishop Tobin, and Sister Therese, President of the University, and particularly Senator Pell—a great supporter of Tibet and a great supporter of truth, I am overjoyed to be with you here today, amongst students and friends.

I greatly appreciate the genuine and human warmth I feel here today. Although the weather is quite cold, quite windy . . . but in your expression, I see a kind of warm feeling. This expression of warmth must come from a genuine feeling of closeness. It is impossible for this kind of expression of warmth and feeling to come out of suspicion, out of anger, out of jealousy.

This is my last day in the United States for this visit. I came from Washington on a chartered plane and the pilot warned me today that there could be turbulence. But the flight was very smooth. I think that, too, is a sign of your warmth. Then when I reached the airport—you know, tonight I'm leaving to Scotland, without much sleep. So at the airport I really felt, "Oh, what kind of lunch will they serve today, because tonight is a long flight!" But Sister Therese really gave us a delicious lunch. So now I have enough fuel to reach Scotland tomorrow morning. So I really appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you very much.

And then we met with our longtime friend, Senator Pell, who has been a friend for many years, I think since 1979. Whenever I visited Capitol Hill I always saw my dear friend, and these days, from the Americans— from both houses of Congress and the administration, I feel a lot of support. They have all shown concern, serious concern about Tibet. This supportive atmosphere happened because of the effort of our longtime friend. So I very much appreciate it. I want to thank you in

front of a lot of people, especially young people, on behalf of six million Tibetan people. I thank you. [The Dalai Lama bows to Senator Pell —followed by applause. . .]

I always have considered those who support Tibet not just pro-Tibetan, but pro-justice. I often tell our supporters since one of the reasons why you are supporting our cause is our nonviolent principle, you should carry nonviolent principles in your daily life, in your families. So that is one way that you are supporting our movement by following a nonviolent path.

So in order to express your appreciation about nonviolent principles, your own daily life should be . . . well, of course, we all have a little quarrel. This always happens. Now I, myself —am always talking about nonviolence, always talking compassion, but occasionally I too experience a little irritation, a little anger. As a result, harsh words happen sometimes. That doesn't matter. A small quarrel, a few harsh words within the atmosphere of nonviolence, within the atmosphere of compassion is okay—especially among young people. I think your lives are so full of energy, so it is inevitable that there will be some disagreement. Problems are bound to happen.

This is my theme of a human approach to world peace. Peace I believe, very much involves motivation. We cannot make a distinction between peace or nonviolence, and violence on the basis of just superficial appearances. As I mentioned before, if there are harsh words or some sort of violent attitude, but deep down there is also compassion, and friendship—then, you see, these words, this sort of appearance doesn't matter. A serious teacher or parent, for example, in order to help a student or a children may sometimes use harsh words or have a harsh attitude, but these things are done out of sense of concern, out of sense of care. So essentially these verbal actions and physical actions are, essentially, nonviolence. On the other hand, if out of motivation you want to cheat someone, you want to take advantage or exploit someone, really exploit someone, and you use soft word, or gifts: outwardly that is nonviolence, but essentially it is violence. Violence and

nonviolence depend, very much, on your motivations.

Look at world peace. World peace will not be achieved through just prayer, I think. World peace can only be achieved through inner peace. Here I usually describe what we need in order to achieve genuine lasting world peace. We need external disarmament which many nations are showing an interest in or making an effort at. Wonderful—such as reducing nuclear weapons. Some states are even talking about a complete ban of nuclear weapons. These are wonderful, wonderful beginnings. Eventually this should be our goal, the whole world eventually should be a demilitarized world. This is the way of external disarmament.

But, in order to achieve this, we first need inner disarmament. We have, for example, all sorts of emotions. Some emotions are tough, and harmful. Those emotions can be called our inner armament. They create suffering, not only for others but also for ourselves. When anger, hatred, and jealousy develop, inner peace of mind immediately vanishes; it is destroyed. That is very clear. Even if you have the best facilities and material conditions, as soon as hatred or anger develops, all those facilities cannot bring peace of mind. These emotions are really weapons that destroy our inner peace.

Inner disarmament, therefore, should take place to reduce these negative emotions, and the negative fruits of these emotions. Only then can inner peace be maintained, and with inner peace you gain greater self confidence, and your mind becomes normal. With the help of education, you can function and perform human activities in a more realistic way. When because of turbulence or inner armaments your peaceful mind is disturbed, along come both fear and doubt. These emotions then become hindrances on the normal mind. Under those circumstances you cannot see or think clearly. So when we take a decision while our mind is engaged with these negative emotions, we often come to wrong decisions. Why?

Everyone tries her or his best to deal with situations and overcome problems. But often the decision is wrong. Why? I think it's caused by a lack of judgment, by a lack of understanding about reality. So therefore your approach to understanding the problem becomes itself unrealistic. Inner disarmament is essential to clearly see the things, as they are. I think in our daily experiences, our daily life when we develop strong emotions, then we are also blind to reality. Sometimes when we lose our temper, towards a person or things, we see that thing, or that person, in a completely negative way. But when anger cools down, then we also begin to feel regret.

I will tell you a story. When I was in Tibet, I think I was around ten years old, I had a small parrot. The parrot was truly beautiful. When my teacher—people often called him "Lord Chamberlain," because he was a high official—who later became my tutor for letters. Whenever my tutor came, he always brought nuts to feed that small parrot. I noticed that even from distance when the parrot heard the sound of his footsteps, the parrot knew he was coming. The parrot always showed affection and eagerness for him.

And so I, the young Dalai Lama, about ten years old, also wanted to have that kind of relationship with that small parrot. So I fed it occasionally. A few times, I fed it a nut. But that small parrot never showed me that kind of friendly attitude. [Then I lost my patience. Then I used a little stick to beat on him. [Laughter] Whenever the parrot heard the sound of my footsteps the parrot became very uncomfortable. Why?

I cannot blame everything on that small parrot; instead, it was my own mistake. If I had fed that parrot continuously, even at the initial stage where he did not show me the affection I wanted, if I had continuously shown him loving kindness, then I think the reward would also have come. So that's my small story.

I will tell you one other story. In Lhasa, I had, I think, three cars which belonged to the 13th

Dalai Lama. Those cars sometimes worked quite well most times, sometimes not . Once, when I was returning from India, I noticed the driver was under the car doing repair work. Somehow he hit his head. Then he lost his temper. Because of his bad temper, he became even more foolish. He suffered; the car did not suffer.

Because of his emotion, and his anger, perhaps he thought, "Oh, the more I bang against it, the more this car will suffer." But that was totally wrong, wasn't it? These negative emotions developed. He could not see reality. He could not think about the problem. These negative emotions became part of his mind.

This, too, happens in our daily experiences, but it's useful to know that some emotions are harmful, and bad; therefore, you have to take a stand. You have to distance yourself from these negative emotions. Usually, anger comes when you face some problem, some trouble. Anger looks like as if it will protect you, like God. Anger also gives you extra energy; so therefore, I think, anger deceives us and that's why it's so powerful.

But it is also a mistake. We must have a clear awareness that such destructive emotions are bad. When negative emotions appear, we must distance ourselves from them. We must have the kind of attitude that reduces the strength, and the intensity, of these negative emotions.

Yet, in emotions, there are many constructive or positive aspects—such as compassion. Compassion brings inner strength. Compassion and hatred are opposite. Consider the temperature, for example. When the temperature rises, coolness drops. So, in the same way, the more we increase compassionate emotion, the more the emotion of hatred automatically decreases. I think in the nature of things there are opposite, contradictory forces. Because of that nature, there is a possibility of change. So, similarly, in our emotions there are contradictory forces or contradictory emotions. Therefore, there's a possibility of change. How, then, do we increase compassion?

It's important to know what compassion is. Compassion is a feeling of closeness; however, attachment is also a feeling a closeness. But in attachment, the feeling of closeness arises mainly because there is something good for me that I can use. That kind of attitude is self-centered. It comes out of self-centered motivation.

The feeling of closeness, in genuine compassion, is based on the recognition that others have the same rights as I to work on problems. On that basis, we develop a sense of concern about others. The feeling of respect for others rights, feeling of sameness or oneness with others, the realization that I and others are equal—all come from a developed sense of concern, a sense of closeness with others. That is genuine compassion.

Closeness based on attachment, based on "my", "my", "my" is essentially biased because it is based on being close to oneself. I feel a sense of closeness to the person, but in reality this is not closeness at all and can even be harmful. This leads us to call the other who is not close to us: "enemy."

But when we feel genuine compassion, even though the "enemy's" attitude towards us is negative, we recognize that that "enemy" is also a sentient being who wants happiness and wants to avoid suffering. Based on that recognition, we develop a sense of concern. That's genuine compassion. Genuine compassion is unbiased.

Genuine compassion reaches everywhere. Only human beings can develop such altruism, such compassion. Other mammals, social animals, do have some limited compassion, or limited altruism. Yet because of human intelligence, because of human memory and human capacity to see a wider picture, we have the potential to develop unbiased compassion. This is truly precious.

All spirituality–Christianity, Judaism, Muslim, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism—all these major traditions carry the message of love, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment —all carry it.

It is inherent within all these different religious traditions. It is important to human beings.

All major religious traditions teach us the importance of these things. I think this message is the common message. And from there, I think, genuine mutual respect among different traditions, mutual admiration can develop as well, since all major religious traditions have the same message of love, and compassion. We can also see that there are people from these different traditions who have these inner qualities, who become wonderful human beings. You can witness this. This leads us to some kind of conclusion, that different philosophies matter only in the good human they produce. As long as they carry the same message, the message of these essential human qualities, then harmony automatically comes forward as well. And we see the true purpose of these different philosophies.

One can see great differences between the theistic religion, and non-theistic religions, by simply considering their philosophies. Consider the concept of God, for example—where there are great differences of interpretation. Clearly, there is difficulty in achieving a spirit of pluralism. It is a concept of one truth, one religion, versus the concept of several truths, several religions. And differences become difficult to explain. But if we have clear understanding or awareness, that there are differences, but that these differences are necessary, then we also see that different approaches can serve more people.

One approach cannot satisfy everyone. We need different approaches as long as they carry the same message. Compassion is so important for humanity that all different religious traditions, from different times and places have all carried this same message: all emphasize similar importance of such things.

Let me address compassion for non-believers. This is important

How does our life start? As a child, with a mother's milk, with a mother's physical touch. During

that early time, if our mother, or someone else, without a sense of care, without a sense of compassion abandons us, we cannot survive. This is the way human life starts. And in accordance, medical scientists have found that after birth, during those first few weeks, the physical touch by a mother or someone else is crucial. During that period, of only a few weeks, the enlargement of the brain takes place during the nursing period; the healthy development of the brain, occurs because of the human touch. Human affection is the fundamental factor in the way our life begins.

Then for those of you, young boys and girls, who always have affection in your home, your physical growth is more sound, and your study in class is also smoother, I think. But unfortunately, if there are some of you who are lacking such affection in your home, then your physical growth will suffer, and so will your studies. Because of this lack of affection, a youth like this eventually becomes difficult and those who grow lacking human affection find it very difficult, as adults, to show affection to others.

On many, many occasions I have participated in seminars addressing problems among the youth and society in general. The participants are often social workers, psychologists, educators, and all agree that there's some problem we are facing in modern society, particularly among the youth, because of the lack of human affection—mainly in the family, but also society in general as well. But if we think carefully, human affection and human compassion become the foundations for proper development. Modern neuroscientists have actually found actual changes in the brain as a person is experiencing compassionate feelings. The left side of the brain becomes more active; scientists consider this a positive sign for happiness and good for health. (A more agitated mind is also bad for health.) Now we have the scientific basis—some might say, evidence—that a calm mind, a compassionate mind is useful even for our own health.

Let me also address older people. Whether you are a politician or a businessman or a scientist or

whatever field you work in, the more compassionate you are, the more it will bring "universal justice"—just as this university promotes seeking wisdom and promoting justice I feel that with justice and honesty, the truth will come, justice will come. Deep inside, all things are based on self-confidence, and compassion.

When compassion and the motivation for compassion are present, you can deal more easily with other fellow human beings, as brothers and sisters. There is no reason to cheat one another. If you are lacking that inner quality, and think only of yourself, and disregard other's rights, then your attitude becomes one of saying one thing and doing something different altogether. Dishonesty usually follows.

Sometimes you have situations where it looks like there is a justice on paper, but in actual truth there is no justice. Truthful justice and honesty are linked with deeper emotions. Other scientific findings suggest that people who often express themselves by using words like "mine", "I", "me" have a greater risk of heart attack. Why? Because such people who use such self-centered sort of words show the expression of their thinking by those words. All their mental thinking becomes very narrow. In that narrow, sort of, focus even small problems loom large.

Those with less self-centered attitudes think about others and then their minds widen. Within that widened mind, even serious problems appear insignificant. That makes a difference. If one thinks only of oneself, then some kind of inner door closes. There is difficulty communicating with others. Once a more compassionate attitude is developed, however, then that inner door is opened. Then it becomes easier to communicate with others. That makes a difference.

Using common sense, common experience and scientific findings, we can develop a conviction that positive emotions such as compassion are useful and valuable. This is the basis of emotional secularity, though not necessarily religious belief. Without religious belief, there are still plenty of

reasons to be a warmhearted person.

These are ways to reshape our inner person or inner self. Once our inner self becomes more sensible, more compassionate, then inner peace automatically comes. This, in turn, brings more peace within the family, and that kind of family joins more with the whole community and the entire community becomes a more compassionate community. That, I believe, is the way to develop genuine world peace.

A peaceful world does not mean that problems and conflicts suddenly disappear. No, as long as human beings remain on the earth, as long as there is this marvelous human intelligence, different views or opinions will always be there. So, too, some conflict, some disagreement, will always take place—and different interests will always be there. We therefore need mechanisms and methods to deal with these differences, these conflicts. That is the spirit of dialogue: Respect others' view. Respect others' right. Then react to make some compromise. This is the way.

Today's world is not like the ancient world. In the ancient world, communities were independent. In the modern world, whether concerning economic or environmental issues, we are heavily interconnected and interdependent. This is our new reality.

The best way to handle this reality is not to use force but to use peaceful, human approaches—so that when conflict arises, we can solve that conflict in a human way. Through dialogue and in a spirit of compromise, a spirit of reconciliation. This is why we promote world peace. We must promote this spirit of dialogue.

My generation, Senator Pell's generation, is ready now to say goodbye. A younger generation, most of which is this audience—you are all so young, so fresh and full of enthusiasm. I can see brightness on your faces. Your faces are beautiful, and under those faces, your minds are fresh. I see something very receptive.

I think, perhaps, you lack a little patience. You want something immediately, everything right away. But that's our nature, youth's nature. With a little bit more patience and determination, and if you think more wisely and in a wider way, then you will be the generation to truly shape the new century, the twenty-first century.

The beginning of the twenty-first century was not a very healthy one, not a very happy one. But that doesn't matter. There are decades ahead still to come. You are the generation who will shape the whole world into a new, peaceful, friendly, compassionate earth. For the rest of your life, you will enjoy this time. And at the end of this century and at the beginning of twenty-second century, you can truly say that "Our generation made the world more peaceful, more beautiful." All the credit goes to you.

Often, I say that the twentieth century was a century of bloodshed, a century of violence. From that we learned that violence was the wrong path. The only way is peaceful resolution. You should turn this century into a century of dialogue.

Thank you.