

## Editorial

### *1991: Dark Age or Renaissance?*

Make no mistake, we are presently living in a Dark Age. This is an age when human life is coming to be valued less and less; it is a pagan age, in which sheer exercise of power is replacing natural law. We have an awesome task before us: to effect a Renaissance before it is too late.

The age in which we are living is not that much different from the periods during which Dante or Leibniz struggled to reassert the hegemony of God's law on Earth, to reawaken in men and women the assumption of that responsibility laid upon their shoulders, because each was created in the image of God.

When, in 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on defeated Japan, the world drew back in horror, and most Americans have now come to view that decision by President Truman as a terrible wrong. Yet today, there are reportedly one thousand nuclear devices ready on hand for U.S. use in the Persian Gulf, and President Bush is threatening to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, or to launch an annihilating strike upon Iraqi population centers. Without overlooking the developing anti-war movement, the outcry, at a time when such an atrocity is still preventable, is nowhere near commensurate with the enormity of the impending catastrophe. There is no justification for any U.S. military attack against Iraq—certainly none for an attack on millions of innocent civilians.

That the people of the West are relatively quiescent, speaks of the blunting of regard for human life—for the lives of millions of individuals. No longer does this culture, particularly in the United States, view human life as sacred. The murder of Nancy Cruzan is the crucial verification of this awful truth.

It may sound egregious to compare the life of one disabled young woman to the tens of millions of innocent civilians now threatened by George Bush, yet there is a perfectly lawful relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm in this instance—even down to the role of the media, which retail the lie that Miss Cruzan was “comatose” and “vegetative,” when in fact

neither was true.

What can we say of the brutality of a culture which allowed a young woman to be starved to death, virtually on camera, over a two-week period?

After her automobile accident, Miss Cruzan was able to eat normal meals, while sitting up in the hospital cafeteria, although she could not feed herself. (Subsequently the hospital decided to feed her intravenously, to minimize the time spent caring for her. Her family removed her from all rehabilitation three years ago.) Miss Cruzan was responsive to visitors, and would acknowledge social interaction by squeezing a friend's hand or crying on his or her departure. She suffered from monthly menstrual cramps, yet the media told us that starvation was not a cruel way to end her life.

The United States has reintroduced capital punishment, even for the mentally incapacitated and for minors. Now, we have killed a woman merely because she was disabled. The excuse given was that she would not have wished to live in such a severely disabled condition; yet at the time of her murder, she gave every indication that she wished to live.

Again, when we look from the small to the large, we see genocide operating against whole populations. The most notable case is in Africa, where whole peoples are threatened with famine; but even in the cities of the United States, homeless people are dying every day of malnutrition and cold.

It is not that we lack the means to provide for all of the world's hungry, any more than we lacked the means to care for Nancy Cruzan. Farmers have been forced to stop producing food, so that food can be made into a weapon of social control, to be given or withheld as the oligarchy decides.

A people who forgets the purpose of their Creator, a people which is willing to tolerate such evil, has lost the moral fitness to survive. Yet because each and every one of us has been created in the image of the Creator, the power lies within us to act together as a force for the good.