

came before us and those who will live long afterward. That sense of connection is part of the joy of this season, part of the reason why, no matter how cold it gets, our hearts remain warm.

As we rejoice in the best of what life can be, we ask ourselves how we can act in the spirit of the season not just on this day but on every day. As we look into the eyes of our children filled with life and laughter and promise, we're reminded of our most sacred obligation: nurturing the next generation. Every father and mother must do whatever we can to help our children live decent and responsible lives so they can be the people God intended them to be. And as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops declared in a pastoral letter, "No government can love a child, no policy can substitute for a family's care. The undeniable fact is that our children's future is shaped both by the values of their parents and the policies of our Nation." So we must act as parents, and we must also act as citizens.

On this day of all days, we are reminded of our obligations to every child, not just our own. As long as there are children whose parents can't afford to take them to the doctor, as long as there are young people who live in fear that they will die before their time from gang violence and random gunfire, then each of us is diminished. If each of us could find the wisdom, the courage, and the commitment to help bring peace to all our own streets and peace of mind to our own families here in

America, we could give a wonderful gift to ourselves, to our children, and our beloved country.

For most of us, this is a day of well-earned rest. But it's also a day when we remember that along with family and community, work gives purpose and structure to our lives. In this country, everyone who is able to work should be able to find work. And everyone who works should be able to support a family. When we restore dignity and security of work for all people, we'll go a long way toward restoring the fabric of life in all our communities. I'm glad that more Americans are working today than there were last year, but I know we've got a long way to go.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to all those who are working today who may wish they weren't working on this day, from those who care for the sick in our hospitals to those who patrol the streets of our communities. Most of all, we honor the service men and women who stand sentry for our freedom every day of the year. Because of their vigilance on this Christmas Day, our Nation is at peace. And although they may be thousands of miles away, they are close to us today.

To all those who hear me now, wherever this Christmas morning finds you, I wish you the best of holiday seasons, and may God bless you and your family.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:55 a.m. on December 22 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 25.

Statement on the Death of Norman Vincent Peale

December 25, 1993

The name of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale will forever be associated with the wondrously American values of optimism and service. Dr. Peale was an optimist who believed that whatever the antagonisms and complexities of modern life brought us, that anyone could prevail by approaching life with a simple sense of faith. And he served us by instilling that optimism in every Christian and every other person who came in contact with his writings or his hopeful soul. In a productive and giving life that spanned

the 20th century, Dr. Peale lifted the spirits of millions and millions of people who were nourished and sustained by his example, his teaching, and his giving. While the Clinton family and all Americans mourn his loss, there is some poetry in his passing on a day when the world celebrates the birth of Christ, an idea that was central to Dr. Peale's message and Dr. Peale's work. He will be missed.