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who was killed during the assault on Fallujah. His mom, Janet, sent me a letter and told me how much Byron loved being a marine and how proud he was to be on the frontline against terror. She wrote, "When Byron was home the last time, I said that I wanted to protect him like I had since he was born. He just hugged me and said, 'You've done your job, Mom. Now it is my turn to protect you.' " Ladies and gentlemen, with grateful hearts we honor freedom's defenders and our military families, represented here this evening by Sergeant Norwood's mom and dad, Janet and Bill Norwood.

[*At this point, in the First Lady's box, guest Safia Taleb al-Suhail embraced guest Janet Norwood.*]

In these 4 years, Americans have seen the unfolding of large events. We have known times of sorrow and hours of uncertainty and days of victory. In all this history, even when we have disagreed, we have seen threads of purpose that unite us. The attack on freedom in our world has reaffirmed our confidence in freedom's power to change the world. We are all part of a great venture: To extend the promise of freedom in our country, to renew the values that sustain our liberty, and to spread the peace that freedom brings.

As Franklin Roosevelt once reminded Americans, "Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth." And we live in the country where the biggest dreams are born. The abolition of slavery was only a dream until it was fulfilled. The liberation of Europe from fascism was only a dream until it was achieved. The fall of imperial communism was only a dream until, one day, it was accomplished. Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of providence is uneven and unpredictable, yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.

Thank you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast

February 3, 2005

Thank you all very much. Thank you for the warm welcome. You know, last night was a prayerful occasion. [*Laughter*] I noticed a lot of Members were praying that I would keep my speech short. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you for getting up so early in the morning. You resisted temptation to sleep in. Thanks for having us.

I appreciate Jo Ann Emerson's leadership on this prayer breakfast. I want to thank Elaine Chao for her prayer and for representing my Cabinet. And I want to thank all my Cabinet officers who are here today. I appreciate the leadership of the Congress, Senator Frist and Leader Pelosi, Leader DeLay. I want to thank the Senators who spoke and appreciate the Congresspeople who are on the stage here as well.

I want to thank His Excellency Marc Ravalomanana, from the—Madagascar, the President of that great country. And welcome to our country, Mr. President. *Tambien, mi amigo,* the President of Honduras, Ricardo Maduro. Welcome. Glad you're here.

I want to thank Wintley Phipps for his beautiful music. Sergeant Norman, your prayers worked. [*Laughter*] You did a fantastic job. Pretty darn eloquent for a person from Wyoming. [*Laughter*] Don't tell the Vice President. [*Laughter*]

Tony Hall, as you can tell, I obviously made the right choice to send somebody—really good job. And Janet, thank you for your service as well.

Laura and I are really honored to be here too. It's a fabulous moment in our Nation's Capital. This morning reminds us that prayer has always been one of the great equalizers in American life. Here we thank God for his great blessings in one voice, regardless of our backgrounds. We recognize in one another the spark of the Divine that gives all human beings their inherent dignity and worth, regardless of religion.

Through fellowship and prayer, we acknowledge that all power is temporary and must ultimately answer to His purposes. And we know that affirming this truth is particularly appropriate in the heart of a Capital built upon the promise of self-government. No one understood this better than Abraham Lincoln.

In November 1864, after being reelected to his second term, Lincoln declared he would be "the most shallow and self-conceited blockhead on Earth if he ever thought he could do his job without the wisdom which comes from God and not from men." Throughout a terrible Civil War, he issued many exhortations to prayer, calling upon the American people to humble themselves before their Maker and to serve all those in need.

Our faith-based institutions display that same spirit of prayer and service in their work every day. Lincoln's call is still heard throughout the land. People of faith have no corner on compassion. But people of faith need compassion if they are to be true to their most cherished beliefs. For prayer means more than presenting God with our plans and desires, prayer also means opening ourselves to God's priorities, especially by hearing the cry of the poor and the less fortunate.

When the tsunamis hit those on the far side of the world, the American Government rightly responded. But the American response is so much more than what our Government agencies did. Look at the list of organizations bringing relief to the people from Indonesia to Sri Lanka. They're full of religious names: Samaritan's Purse, American-Jewish World Service, Baptist World Aid, the Catholic Medical Mission Board. They do a superb job delivering relief across the borders and continents and cultures.

Today, millions of people across this Earth get the help they need only because our faith-based institutions live the commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Often, that means remembering the people forgotten or overlooked in a busy world, those in Africa suffering from HIV/AIDS, young girls caught up in the global sex trade, victims of religious persecution.

In these great moral challenges of our times, our churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples are providing the vision that is changing lives. I've seen some of their miracles up close. Last June, I met Veronica Braewell, a 20-year-old refugee from Liberia. As a 13-year-old child, Veronica witnessed armed men killing children in horrific ways. As she fled this madness, Veronica left—was left for dead atop a pile of bodies, until her grandmother found her. In August 2003, Catholic Social Agency helped resettle her in Pennsylvania, where Veronica is now completing the circle of compassion by working in a home for elderly in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and studying to become a certified nursing assistant.

When Veronica told me of her story, it was through the kind of tears no young woman should ever know. And when she finished, she dried her eyes and said, "Thank you, Mr. President, for my freedom." But I told her, it wasn't me she needed to thank; she needed to thank the good hearts of the United States of America. The America that embraced Veronica would not be possible without the prayer that drives and leads and sustains our armies of compassion.

I thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today and hope that as a nation we will never be too proud to commend our cares to Providence and trust in the goodness of His plans.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:59 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to speaker and entertainer Wintley Phipps; Sgt. Douglas Norman, USA, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment; and Ambassador Tony P. Hall, U.S. Mission to United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, and his wife, Janet. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Fargo, North Dakota

February 3, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming out. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. The Governor told me—he said, "You come over