

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 5, 2019

Thank you very much, Secretary Bernhardt. We also have with us some very special people: Congressman Jim Jordan, Congressman Mark Meadows, and Representative John Ratcliffe. It's an honor to be with everyone tonight.

And all across our land, Melania and I would like to wish you a very, very Merry Christmas. And now the First Lady will do the honors of lighting the National Christmas Tree. So we'll count from five down to that very special number. Five, four, three, two, one!

That's great.

[At this point, the U.S. Marine Corps Band played an arrangement of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."]

That's beautiful. Thank you very much.

And let us show our appreciation to the incredible workers at the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, please. Did such an incredible job. Thank you very much.

And thank you, as well, to the U.S. Marine Corps Band and the Tucson Arizona Boys Choir. You know that. The chorus is fantastic. And thank you very much, Tucson Arizona. Thank you very much. I also want to thank a special group of young, wonderful people: West Tennessee Youth Chorus. They're here, and they're doing beautifully.

In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit the first National Christmas Tree. Later that night, African American community centers held an outdoor worship service on these grounds. And during that service, the Washington Monument was illuminated with a beautiful cross, a powerful reminder of the meaning of Christmas.

More than 2,000 years ago, a brilliant star shone in the East. Wise men traveled far, far afield. I mean, they were a long distance away. And they came, and they stood with us under the star, where they found the Holy Family in Bethlehem. As the Bible tells us, when the wise men "had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him."

Christians give thanks that the Son of God came into the world to save humanity. Jesus Christ inspires us to love one another with hearts full of generosity and grace.

Joining us today are David and Sharron Hudson of the Salvation Army. Each year, through their "Angel Tree" program, the Salvation Army brings new gifts to more than 600,000 children. David and Sharron are an inspiration to us all. And, David and Sharron, thank you very much for being with us. Thank you.

Also with us is Sarah Verardo, the wife of a wounded hero and the CEO of Independence Fund, which serves wounded warriors. During the holidays, Sarah gives high-tech wheelchairs to veterans and hosts Christmas celebrations for those in recovery. Does a fantastic job. And, Sarah, thank you very much. You're uplifting our Nation. Thank you very much. Thank you, Sarah. Thank you.

We are forever in debt to the brave veterans and servicemembers. We applaud their noble service. There is nobody like them. They are an inspiration to us all. We also salute our incredible police and sheriffs, Federal law enforcement, Secret Service, as well as our firefighters,

paramedics, and first responders. And thank you all for being here. We have a lot of you here. And again, very, very incredible, special people. Thank you very much for being here.

And here tonight is Pastor Obed Jauregui of Bethany Church in Nazarene—in Miami. His congregation serves Thanksgiving meals to families in need, and now they are preparing their annual toy drive. Pastor Obed, thank you very much. And we really do appreciate your being with us. You're a special man who has done an incredible job. People are talking about you all over our country. What a great job you've done. Thank you very much, Pastor.

And, at Christmas, we remember this eternal truth: Every person is a beloved child of God. As one grateful Nation, we praise the joy of family, the blessings of freedom, and the miracle of Christmas.

On behalf of Melania and our entire family, Merry Christmas, and God bless you all. Thank you very much. Merry Christmas, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:33 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David Hudson, national commander, and Sharron Hudson national president of women's ministries, Salvation Army; and Charlotte, NC, resident Mike Verardo, who was deployed as an infantryman with the Army's 82d Airborne Division when he was wounded by an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan on April 24, 2010.

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