

The President. May the spirit of the season be with you today and throughout the new year. From our family to yours, merry Christmas, happy new year, may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. on December 23 in Room 459

in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation *December 24, 1999*

The President. On this holiest of holidays, Hillary and I wish all of you a very merry Christmas. At the dawn of a new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, the gifts we can give to the future.

The First Lady. From our family to yours, merry Christmas, happy new year, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. on December 23 in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

Radio Remarks for the “Lost Lives” Christmas Eve Broadcast *December 24, 1999*

3625, Maura Monaghan, from Tyrone. A Catholic girl, just 18 months old. To her family, little Maura Monaghan was known simply as “Mossie.” She was the youngest victim of the Omagh bombing. Her mother, Avril, her grandmother, Mary Grimes, and her unborn twin sisters also were killed on that Saturday afternoon, the 15th of August 1998, at 10 past 3 p.m., when that terrible bomb exploded.

They had gone to Omagh town as a special treat, to celebrate Mary Grimes’ birthday. They had even been to church earlier that day, the same church where their funeral services would be held just a few days later.

I still feel a personal connection with this tragedy. Two weeks later, Hillary and I visited Omagh. We saw the scene where 31 people were killed in the worst single incident of the Troubles. And then we went to the Leisure Center, where the families of the victims had had to wait for news of their loved ones. They were again to meet us, as were many victims who had been terribly injured on that day.

That meeting was one of the most difficult and moving experiences of our lives. But I have to say, it was also one of the most uplifting. Again and again, people who had been injured or lost loved ones said, “Keep going with the peace process. Keep going, and don’t give up on it. Do whatever you can to make sure that nobody else suffers as we are suffering.”

I know they suffer still. I know the first dawn of the new millennium will be a sad time for those who remember the family and friends who should still be with them. But I never forgot their courage and their faith in the new beginning for Northern Ireland and neither did so many of you, who raised your voices and said, “Enough is enough.”

And so we kept going. And now it looks as though, after all the difficulties, the new day we’ve been talking about for so long is finally at hand.

And so today, on Christmas Eve, we remember little Maura Monaghan, “Mossie,” a beautiful, curly-haired angel who was loved by everyone. She lives not only in our memory but in our determination to build a better Northern Ireland for all the children of tomorrow.

NOTE: The President’s remarks were recorded at 11:28 a.m. on December 18 in the Oval Office

at the White House for later broadcast on RTE in Ireland. Maura Monaghan was the 3,625th victim of the Troubles. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 3:30 a.m., December 24. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

The President’s Radio Address *December 25, 1999*

Good morning. Hillary, Chelsea, and I join millions of American families celebrating Christmas today. For Americans of many faiths, this is a season of renewal, of light returned from darkness, and despair transformed to hope. And as the year ends, and this millennium draws to a close, we all have a chance and a responsibility to reflect on our lives and rejoice in our blessings.

On this holiday morning, I know many of us are thankful for the love of family and friends and the richness of the world around us. We’re grateful for the advances in science and medicine that are letting us live longer, healthier lives. We enjoy freedom and prosperity at home and peace with our neighbors. And we are privileged to be a leader for peace and liberty around the world, from Bosnia to Kosovo to Northern Ireland and the Middle East. And we’re very thankful for the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, especially those who can’t be with their families as they stand on the frontlines of freedom far from home.

Most of all, we’re blessed by the millions of Americans who take time out from the holiday season, and all year round, to remember those in need, those who are sick, those who are troubled. In the spirit of the season, Americans are reaching out to victims of disaster, like our neighbors in Venezuela, where floods and landslides have killed thousands and left tens of thousands homeless this Christmas. I’m proud that the United States is leading the international relief effort there and that so many Americans are donating food, clothes, and medicine for the survivors.

Here at home, we’re reaching out to the poorest among us, to those who do not yet share in America’s growing prosperity. We’re making new efforts to reach out to the homeless, to help them find housing, medical care, and jobs. Today I am glad to announce that we will be providing nearly \$1 billion in new Federal grants for housing and social services to help the homeless in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Those grants will fund proven, successful programs that help homeless families, veterans, and children, and people looking for work. They are a Christmas gift all of us can all be proud of.

I want to end my talk today with a Christmas story. A few days ago, I helped prepare holiday meals at the D.C. Central Kitchen, a community kitchen that prepares 3,000 meals a day for the homeless and hungry and trains people to work in food services, to hold down jobs, to turn their lives around.

I worked with a man named Steve Pritchett. As a young man, Steve had a scholarship for college, and his future looked bright. But he made some mistakes, and as a result, he’s been homeless for much of his adult life. At Christmastime, he might go see his mother for a day, but if it was cold, you’d most likely find Steve spending Christmas under a bus shelter or beside a steam grate.

But this year, Steve found the D.C. Central Kitchen and discovered it’s never too late to change. He’s been in their training program for 2 months now, and already he’s been offered a job. He’s clean and off the streets. Best of all, his mother, who never gave up on her son, is so proud. She told him, “Steve, you don’t