

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at Kelly Temple Church of God in Christ in Harlem. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop James Gaylord, Kelly Temple; Bishop Frank O. White, Church of God in Christ Little Zion; Rev. Reginald Williams, Charity Baptist Church; Rev. Herb Daughtry, founder, National Black United Front; C. Virginia Fields, president, Manhattan Borough;

New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; former Mayor David Dinkins of New York City; and Bishop Chandler D. Owens, presiding bishop, Church of God in Christ, Inc.; civil rights activists Hosea Williams and Rev. Jesse Jackson; and Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in New York City October 31, 2000

Thank you. Well, first let me say, I understand that Hillary has already spoken, so I really don't have to say much. [*Laughter*] But I want to say first, I'm late because the radar went out in Louisville, Kentucky, today, and so it took us a while to get off. Even Air Force One needs radar because there are incoming planes. So we found some innovative way to get here, and I'm glad we made it.

Niall, thank you; and thank you, John. And I thank all of you for being here. A lot of interesting people in this crowd tonight—my friend Frank McCourt, thank you for being here; and thank you, Tom Cahill. Thank you, Gabriel Byrne, for being here. It's nice not to have to go to the movies to see you. [*Laughter*] And I thank all the rest of you for being here.

I want to tell you how grateful I am that somehow, some way, when I first started running for President, the Irish in New York found me. It happened in other places, too. My friend Neal Hartigan, former attorney general of Illinois, is here from Cook County, Chicago. But Bruce Morrison, who Hillary and I had known since we were in law school, and a couple of other people, somehow they hooked us all up, and we started this odyssey. And people thought I was nuts when I said, if I got elected President, I would try to help in the Irish peace process. And they said—and then I got elected, and then all these people who had helped me in other contexts and were steeped in the foreign policy lore of America said, “You can't do that.” I said, “But I told them I would.” [*Laughter*] “I gave my word; I've got to do this.” And they said, “But it will be terrible.” I said, “It won't be terrible.” I said, “I love Great Britain; I went to college there.” I said, “We'll be shoul-

der to shoulder with Britain on a thousand other things,” but I said, “Within 6 months, they'll be glad we did this.” And sure enough, they now are.

So I can't thank those of you enough who started out with me, who gave me the chance to do this. It's been one of the greatest things about being President, to know that the United States, the home of the largest Irish diaspora in the world, had played some positive role in bringing that long conflict to an end. Now, we're not out of the woods yet, but Mr. Trimble dodged a bullet this week, and we still have work to do. And all of you know what it is as well as I do. But I just want you to know, for all of you who have helped me to do this, I thank you.

And the second thing I want to thank you for is when 800 of you showed up on the White House lawn during a rather difficult time for me—[*laughter*]—and said that the Irish-American community still thought that I should serve as President of the United States, which I will never forget. I'll never forget that.

But most important of all to me, I want to thank you for what you're doing for Hillary. Because when we started this—and this is, by the way, a big issue in the national election, too, Presidential election—when we started this, and Hillary—you know she went to Northern Ireland once without me, in addition to the two times we went together. And she was working with all these women in this Vital Voices group, and she said, “If we can just get all these women together, they'd figure out a way to get over this problem.” And I think she made an independent and significant contribution to the

Irish peace process, for which I am very, very grateful.

And now all over the world she's had these groups of women sort of upsetting apple carts, in Africa and Latin America. *[Laughter]* It turns out there are troublesome women everywhere—*[laughter]*—who don't like it when troglodyte males keep wars going on when it makes no sense anymore, and conflicts—I mean, it's quite interesting. And I think it's been wonderful.

The only other thing I would say is that I think it's quite important that you have come here and contributed, but I think it would also be quite important if every day for the last week of this election you tell people why you came and why you support her, because people need reasons.

I think that—I'm terrifically happy that the country is in such good shape and that we can have an election when there is prosperity, when there is social progress, when there is the absence of domestic crisis and foreign threat. I'm happy about that. I'm glad that there is so much less personal venom in the atmosphere in this election than there has been in times past. It never made any sense, and it certainly doesn't now. Maybe we've just drawn out a full quota over the last 8 years; there's none left. *[Laughter]* But I'm glad for that. But that should not obscure the fact that there are serious, significant differences between the candidates for the Senate, the candidates for President and Vice President, that will have consequences for how we all live and work and relate to each other and the rest of the world.

So the only other thing I'd like to say is that the real problem with events like this is, in the parlance of my faith, we're always preaching to the saved. And every one of you have friends who will never come to an event like this. Isn't that right? You've all got friends—most of your friends are not as political as you. They'll never come to an event like this. They'll never come to an event like this. They'll never hear the President give a speech directly, and they'll never do all these things that you do. And I just want to ask you in the last week to go out and tell them why you came tonight,

why it matters that they vote, why it matters that they vote for Hillary and the Vice President and Senator Lieberman, and what the stakes are, what the consequences are. Because I can tell you, they're huge.

You know, we're either going to build on this prosperity or reverse our economic policy. We're either going to keep the social progress going or take down the education, health care, crime, and environmental policies over the last 8 years. We're either going to keep coming together across all the lines that divide us, or walk away from things like the hate crimes legislation or the employment nondiscrimination legislation, the things that—the Supreme Court appointments that will promote civil rights and human rights and bringing us together.

So these things are big deals, I think, and I just hope that, in addition to coming here tonight, you will go out and talk to everybody you can—just people you come across that will never come to something like this.

The last thing I want to say is, I'm highly prejudiced about this Senate race. *[Laughter]* It's not fashionable to admit prejudice in America today. I've tried to make it highly unfashionable to be prejudiced in America. But I am completely prejudiced.

However, having said that, this is the first time in 26 years I have not been on a ballot somewhere. I have had a lot of experience with politics and politicians; most of them are better than they got credit for being. And I've enjoyed knowing most of those I've known. But of all the people I've known, she has the best combination of brains, compassion, determination, and ability to get people together and get things done. She will be a fabulous Senator. And you need to tell people that for the next few days.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 p.m. in the lobby of the Fitzpatrick Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Niall O'Dowd, publisher, the Irish Voice; John Fitzpatrick, owner, Fitzpatrick Hotel; authors Frank McCourt and Tom Cahill; actor Gabriel Byrne; and Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble.