

Message on the Observance of Cinco de Mayo, 2003

May 5, 2003

I send greetings to those celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

Today, millions of people in Mexico and around the world honor the heritage of a proud people by remembering the heroic Battle of Puebla. On May 5th, 1862, Mexico's General Ignacio Zaragoza and his troops achieved a remarkable victory in the face of tremendous challenge and helped secure Mexico's freedom. This example of courage and sacrifice continues to inspire us today, as we are reminded that people of every culture, of every race, and every background, yearn to be free.

This observance also provides an opportunity for the United States to recognize the invaluable contributions of Mexican Americans to our country. Through their

vibrant culture and deep commitment to faith, family, and community, Mexican Americans have enriched our society and contributed to the diversity that makes our Nation strong. We also recognize the many Mexican Americans serving in our Armed Forces who are working to bring freedom and justice to oppressed people. As we remember our two countries' shared history and common values, we look forward to a future of continued friendship and prosperity.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable celebration.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of National Foster Care Month, 2003

May 5, 2003

I send greetings to those celebrating National Foster Care Month.

Children thrive in loving families where they are nurtured, comforted, and protected. For many children, foster parents provide a safe haven until they can return home or be placed with an adoptive family. Across our Nation, approximately 570,000 children are living in foster care. During this month, we honor foster and adoptive parents, mentors, community organizations, and all individuals who embrace the lives of young people in need.

My Administration remains committed to strengthening American families by setting policies that encourage a secure today and a healthy tomorrow for children and families. Through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, we are working to keep families together. When children must

be separated from their families to protect their safety, this program supports efforts to correct the problem and reunite them safely and quickly. The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program also supports adoption and post-adoptive services to place children with loving families, to ease a child's transition into a new family, and to help ensure that families stay strong and intact. And as teens leave the foster care system, the program authorizes States to provide Independent Living vouchers of up to \$5,000 a year for education and vocational training.

Every child in America deserves to live in a safe, permanent, and loving family. I commend foster parents for providing guidance and support to young people and families in crisis. Your important work helps our children develop into confident and