

Remarks on the Election of Pope Benedict XVI

April 19, 2005

Laura and I offer our congratulations to Pope Benedict XVI. He's a man of great wisdom and knowledge. He's a man who serves the Lord. We remember well his sermon at the Pope's funeral in Rome, how his words touched our hearts and the hearts of millions. We join with our fellow citizens and millions around the world who pray

for continued strength and wisdom as His Holiness leads the Catholic Church.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House upon arrival from Springfield, IL.

Statement on the 10th Anniversary of the Oklahoma City Bombing

April 19, 2005

The 10th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing takes us back to the terrible tragedy that touched all Americans and took the lives of so many from Oklahoma City. We remember the malice that led to the death of 168 innocent people in the Murrah Federal Building. For the survivors of this crime and for the families of the dead, the pain goes on. We also remember

the many acts of courage and kindness we saw in the midst of that horror. Oklahoma City will always be one of those places in our national memory where the worst and the best both came to pass. We pray for the lives that were lost that day, and we pray for their families. We ask God for strength and peace for those who lost so much.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 5765

April 19, 2005

I send greetings to those observing Passover, beginning at sundown on April 23.

This celebration marks the historic exodus of the Israelites from Pharaoh's oppression more than 3,000 years ago. During Passover, Jews around the world gather with family and friends to share the story of God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. Through songs and prayers, they remember the blessings and mercy of a just and loving God. By passing this story from generation to generation, they teach the triumph of faith over tyranny and celebrate God's promise of freedom.

The lesson of this story is timeless and reminds us that even in the face of struggle, hope endures. As we work to bring hope to the oppressed, we recall the words of the Psalmist, which are read at the Seder meal: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous Passover.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks Honoring the 2005 National and State Teachers of the Year April 20, 2005

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome. Welcome to the Rose Garden. And it's a beautiful day to continue the tradition of honoring America's finest teachers at the White House. We're really happy you're here.

Somewhere along the way, all of us got to know a teacher who made a real difference in our lives. In my case, I married one—[laughter]—and I appreciate you. I appreciate my love for Laura. I appreciate Laura's love for teaching, and I appreciate the great job you're doing as the First Lady.

She was raised in Midland, just like you were, Carol. Maybe that has something to do with it.

We like to say in our household, teaching is more than a job; it is a calling. You know what I'm talking about. You wouldn't be sitting here if you had not heard the calling. By helping every child realize his or her potential, our teachers show their students that dreams can become reality. What a fantastic job, isn't it, to help somebody realize a dream can become a reality. All who answer the call to teach deserve our support, our respect, and our affection.

Somebody who understands the role of a teacher is our Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, who is with us. Margaret has been a longtime friend. We were involved with education reform in Texas. We bring the spirit of reform to Washington, DC, and you're doing a fine job, Madam Secretary.

The chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, John Boehner, is with us, from the great State of Ohio. Thank you, John. Bob Filner from California; Doc Hastings from Washington; Leonard Boswell from the great State of Iowa—welcome. Appreciate you all. I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedules to come here. This is an impor-

tant moment, and I appreciate you recognizing it as such.

I want to thank the Mayor. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. I always like to tell the Mayor that it's important for the Mayor to fill the potholes—[laughter]—particularly close to White House, Mayor. And you're doing a fine job. Last time I saw the Mayor was at Opening Day. For those of you who follow professional baseball, you know that we've got the Nationals here in town. It's exciting for the Nation's Capital to have the Nationals. And one of the reasons the Nationals are here is because of the Mayor. And so, Mr. Mayor, thank you for your leadership.

And City Councilwoman Carol Schwartz, who I referred to earlier—Laura, Carol, and I were raised in Midland, Texas. Pretty long odds for three people raised in Midland to end up in Washington in the Rose Garden, by the way. [Laughter] But welcome, glad you're here, Carol.

I want to thank the National Teacher of the Year finalists: Stan Murphy from California—San Diego, California; Vicki Goldsmith from Des Moines, Iowa; Tamara Steen from Washington State. We're proud you all are here.

And of course, Jason Kamras, who is standing right here. I want to welcome his parents, Linda and Marvin. Thank you for coming. Congratulations on raising such a fine man. And Jeremy—Jason allowed his brothers, Jeremy and Michael, to show up as well. [Laughter] I asked one of the boys if they ever thought Jason would amount to anything. He told the truth. [Laughter] Jason has proved you wrong. [Laughter]

I want to thank the 51 other State Teachers of the Year for being teachers and being such an accomplished teacher that you're being recognized here in the Rose Garden. We welcome you here. We