

## Statement on the Anniversary of the Virginia Tech Shootings in Blacksburg, Virginia

April 15, 2008

April 16, 2007, brought the deadliest day of violence on a college campus in our Nation's history. The horrific crimes committed at Virginia Tech University filled our souls with sadness. One year later, we remember the victims murdered and wounded that day.

We join our fellow Americans in praying for the families and friends whose hearts ache for their lost loved ones. We continue

to be amazed by the extraordinary Hokie spirit and inspired by the survivors of this tragedy. Students, teachers, and alumni have overcome evil with good by supporting each other with love and compassion. We are humbled by their resilience and confident in the university's bright future.

We pray that God will continue to comfort and heal the people of the Virginia Tech community.

## Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Pope Benedict XVI

April 16, 2008

Holy Father, Laura and I are privileged to have you here at the White House. We welcome you with the ancient words commended by Saint Augustine: *Pax tecum*. Peace be with you.

You've chosen to visit America on your birthday. Well, birthdays are traditionally spent with close friends, so our entire Nation is moved and honored that you've decided to share this special day with us. We wish you much health and happiness today and for many years to come.

This is your first trip to the United States since you ascended to the Chair of Saint Peter. You will visit two of our greatest cities and meet countless Americans, including many who have traveled from across the country to see with you and to share in the joy of this visit. Here in America, you'll find a nation of prayer. Each day, millions of our citizens approach our Maker on bended knee, seeking His grace and giving thanks for the many blessings He bestows upon us. Millions of Americans have been praying for your visit, and millions look forward to praying with you this week.

Here in America, you'll find a nation of compassion. Americans believe that the measure of a free society is how we treat the weakest and most vulnerable among us. So each day, citizens across America answer to the universal call to feed the hungry and comfort the sick and care for the infirm. Each day, across the world, the United States is working to eradicate disease, alleviate poverty, promote peace, and bring the light of hope to places still mired in the darkness of tyranny and despair.

Here in America, you'll find a nation that welcomes the role of faith in the public square. When our Founders declared our Nation's independence, they rested their case on an appeal to the laws of nature and of nature's God. We believe in religious liberty. We also believe that a love for freedom and a common moral law are written into every human heart and that these constitute the firm foundation on which any successful free society must be built.

Here in America, you'll find a nation that is fully modern, yet guided by ancient and eternal truths. The United States is the