

Federal, State, and local partners and provide the necessary resources to support the ongoing investigation. While we do not know all of the details surrounding today's shooting, the initial reports are heartbreaking. I want to of-

fer my condolences to all the families trying to make sense of this difficult situation and pledge the full support from the Federal Government as we heal and cope during this trying time.

Remarks at an Easter Prayer Breakfast April 14, 2014

Please, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, good morning, everybody.

Welcome to the White House, and welcome to our annual Easter prayer breakfast. As always, we are blessed to be joined by so many good friends from around the country. We've got distinguished guests. We've got faith leaders, members of my administration who are here. And I will once again resist the temptation to preach to preachers. [Laughter] It never works out well. I am reminded of the admonition from the Book of Romans: "Do not claim to be wiser than you are." [Laughter] So this morning I want to offer some very brief reflections as we start this Easter season.

But as I was preparing my remarks, something intervened yesterday. And so I want to just devote a few words about yesterday's tragedy in Kansas. This morning our prayers are with the people of Overland Park. And we're still learning the details, but this much we know. A gunman opened fire at two Jewish facilities: a community center and a retirement home. Innocent people were killed. Their families were devastated. And this violence has struck at the heart of the Jewish community in Kansas City.

Two of the victims, a grandfather and his teenage son [grandson],^o attended the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, which is led by our friend Reverend Adam Hamilton. Some of you may know that during my Inauguration, Reverend Hamilton delivered the sermon at the prayer service at the National Cathedral. And I was grateful for his presence and his words. He joined us at our breakfast last year. And at the Easter service for Palm

Sunday last night, he had to break this terrible news to his congregation.

That this occurred now—as Jews were preparing to celebrate Passover, as Christians were observing Palm Sunday—makes this tragedy all the more painful. And today, as Passover begins, we're seeing a number of synagogues and Jewish community centers take added security precautions. Nobody should have to worry about their security when gathering with their fellow believers. No one should ever have to fear for their safety when they go to pray.

And as a government, we're going to provide whatever assistance is needed to support the investigation. As Americans, we not only need to open our hearts to the families of the victims, we've got to stand united against this kind of terrible violence, which has no place in our society. And we have to keep coming together across faiths to combat the ignorance and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, that can lead to hatred and to violence, because we're all children of God. We're all made in His image, all worthy of his love and dignity. And we see what happens around the world when this kind of religious-based or -tinged violence can rear its ugly head. It's got no place in our society.

So this Easter week, of course, we recognize that there's a lot of pain and a lot of sin and a lot of tragedy in this world, but we're also overwhelmed by the grace of an awesome God. We're reminded how He loves us, so deeply that He gave his only begotten Son so that we might live through Him. And in these Holy Days, we recall all that Jesus endured for us: the scorn of the crowds and the pain of the

^o White House correction.

crucifixion. In our Christian religious tradition, we celebrate the glory of the Resurrection, all so that we might be forgiven of our sins and granted everlasting life.

And more than 2,000 years later, it inspires us still. We are drawn to His timeless teachings, challenged to be worthy of His sacrifice, to emulate as best we can His eternal example to love one another just as He loves us. And of course, we're always reminded each and every day that we fall short of that example. And none of us are free from sin, but we can look to His life and strive, knowing that "if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us."

I'll tell you, I felt this spirit when I had the great honor of meeting His Holiness Pope Francis recently. I think it's fair to say that his—those of us of the Christian faith, regardless of our denomination, have been touched and moved by Pope Francis. Now, some of it is his words: his message of justice and inclusion, especially for the poor and the outcast. He implores us to see the inherent dignity in each human being. But it's also his deeds, simple yet profound: hugging the homeless man or washing the feet of somebody who, normally, ordinary folks would just pass by on the street. He reminds us that all of us, no matter what our station, have an obligation to live righteously, and that we all have an obligation to live humbly. Because that's, in fact, the example that we profess to follow.

So I had a wonderful conversations with Pope Francis, mainly about the imperatives of addressing poverty and inequality. And I invited him to come to the United States, and I sincerely hope he will. When we exchanged gifts, he gave me a copy of his inspired writings, "The Joy of the Gospel." And there is a passage that speaks to us today: "Christ's resurrection," he writes, "is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world." And he adds: "Jesus did not rise in vain. May we never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope!"

So this morning my main message is just to say thank you to all of you, because you don't remain on the sidelines. I want to thank you for

your ministries, for your good works, for the marching you do for justice and dignity and inclusion, for the ministries that all of you attend to and have helped organize throughout your communities each and every day to feed the hungry and house the homeless and educate children who so desperately need an education. You have made a difference in so many different ways, not only here in the United States, but overseas as well. And that includes a cause close to my heart, "My Brother's Keeper," an initiative that we recently launched to make sure that more boys and young men of color can overcome the odds and achieve their dreams.

And we're joined by several faith leaders who are doing outstanding work in this area, mentoring and helping young men in tough neighborhoods. We're also joined by some of these young men who are working hard and trying to be good students and good sons and good citizens. And I want to say to each of those young men here, we're proud of you, and we expect a lot of you. And we're going to make sure that we're there for you so that you then in turn will be there for the next generation of young men.

And I mention all this because of all of our many partners for "My Brother's Keeper," it's clergy like you and your congregations that can play a special role to be that spiritual and ethical foundation, that rock, that so many young men need in their lives.

So I want to thank all of you who are already involved. I invite those who are not to get more information, see if you can join in this effort as brothers and sisters in Christ who "never tire of doing good."

And in closing, I'll just recall that old prayer that I think more than one preacher has invoked at the pulpit: "Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and nudge me when I've said enough." [Laughter] The Almighty is nudging me. I thank you for joining us this morning of prayer. I wish you all a blessed Holy Week and Easter, and I'd like to invite my friend Joel Hunter to deliver the opening prayer. Come on up, Joel.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., suspected gunman in the April 13 shooting at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City in Overland Park, KS; William L. Cor-

poron and his grandson Reat G. Underwood, who were killed in the shooting; Adam Hamilton, founding pastor, United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS; and Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed, in Longwood, FL.

Statement on the Observance of Passover

April 14, 2014

Michelle and I send our warmest greetings to all those celebrating Passover in the United States, in Israel, and around the world.

On Tuesday, just as we have every year of my Presidency, my family will join the millions taking part in the ancient tradition of the Seder. We will enjoy the company of friends and loved ones, retell a timeless story, and give thanks for the freedom we are so blessed to enjoy.

Yet, even as we celebrate, our prayers will be with the people of Overland Park, Kansas, and the family and friends of the three innocent people who were killed when a gunman, just 1 day before Passover, opened fire at a Jewish community center and retirement home on Sunday. As Americans, we will continue to stand united against this kind of terrible violence, which has no place in our society. We will continue to come together across faiths to combat the ignorance and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, that can lead to hatred and violence. And we will never lose faith that compassion and justice will ultimately triumph over hate and fear.

For that is one of the great lessons of the Exodus. The tale of the Hebrew slaves and their flight from Egypt carries the hope and promise that the Jewish people have held in their hearts for thousands of years, and it has inspired countless generations in their own struggles for freedom around the globe.

In America, the Passover story has always had special meaning. We come from different places and diverse backgrounds, but we are bound together by a journey from bondage to liberty enshrined in our founding documents and continued in each generation. As we were so painfully reminded on Sunday, our world is still in need of repair, but the story of the Exodus teaches us that with patience, determination, and abundant faith, a brighter future is possible. *Chag Sameach.*

NOTE: The statement referred to William L. Corporon, Reat G. Underwood, and Terri LaManno, who were killed in the April 13 shootings at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the Village Shalom assisted living center in Overland Park, KS; and Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., the suspected gunman.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Boston Marathon Bombing

April 15, 2014

A year ago, tragedy struck at the 117th Boston Marathon. Four innocent people were killed that week, and hundreds more were wounded. Today we remember Krys-
tyle Campbell, Lingzi Lu, Martin Richard, and Sean Collier. And we send our thoughts and prayers to those still struggling to recover.

We also know that the most vivid images from that day were not of smoke and chaos, but of compassion, kindness, and strength: a man in a cowboy hat helping a wounded stranger out of harm's way, runners embracing loved ones and each other, an EMT carrying a spectator to safety. Today we recognize the incredible courage and leadership of so many