

Statement on the Observance of Yom Kippur September 22, 2015

As Jews across America, Israel, and the world gather for the sacred service of Kol Nidre, Michelle and I extend our wishes for an easy fast to all those observing Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement is a time for humility, reflection, and repentance, a chance to be honest with ourselves and one another about our shortcomings. Yet Yom Kippur is also a day of

hope. Through our prayers and through our actions, as individuals and as a community, we can better bridge the realities of our world with the ideals and values we share. On this special day, may our common humanity unite us, and may our common faith in a better future inspire us to continue healing our world. *G'mar chatimah tovah.*

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Pope Francis September 23, 2015

President Obama. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning!

President Obama. What a beautiful day the Lord has made. Holy Father, on behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. I should explain that our backyard is not typically this crowded—[laughter]—but the size and spirit of today's gathering is just a small reflection of the deep devotion of some 70 million American Catholics. It reflects, as well, the way that your message of love and hope has inspired so many people across our Nation and around the world. So, on behalf of the American people, it is my great honor and privilege to welcome you to the United States of America.

Today we mark many firsts. Your Holiness, you've been celebrated as the first Pope from the Americas. This is your first visit to the United States. And you are also the first Pontiff to share an encyclical through a Twitter account. [Laughter]

Holy Father, your visit not only allows us, in some small way, to reciprocate the extraordinary hospitality that you extended to me at the Vatican last year. It also reveals how much all Americans, from every background and every faith, value the role that the Catholic Church plays in strengthening America. From my time working in impoverished neighborhoods with the Catholic Church in Chicago, to my travels as President, I have seen firsthand how, every single day, Catholic communities, priests,

nuns, laity are feeding the hungry, healing the sick, sheltering the homeless, educating our children, and fortifying the faith that sustains so many.

And what is true in America is true around the world. From the busy streets of Buenos Aires to the remote villages in Kenya, Catholic organizations serve the poor, minister to prisoners, build schools, build homes, operate orphanages and hospitals. And just as the Church has stood with those struggling to break the chains of poverty, the Church so often has given voice and hope to those seeking to break the chains of violence and oppression.

And yet I believe the excitement around your visit, Holy Father, must be attributed not only to your role as Pope, but to your unique qualities as a person. In your humility, your embrace of simplicity, in the gentleness of your words, in the generosity of your spirit, we see a living example of Jesus' teachings, a leader whose moral authority comes not just through words, but also through deeds.

You call on all of us, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to put the "least of these" at the center of our concerns. You remind us that in the eyes of God our measure as individuals, and our measure as a society, is not determined by wealth or power or station or celebrity, but by how well we hearken to Scripture's call to lift up the poor and the marginalized, to stand up for justice and against inequality, and to ensure that every human being is able to live in