

In my travels across the great land, a comment that I hear often from our fellow citizens is, “Mr. President, I pray for you and your family.” It’s amazing how many times a total stranger walks up and says that to me. You’d think they’d say, “How about the bridge?” or “How about filling the potholes?” [Laughter] No, they say, “I’ve come to tell you I pray for you, Mr. President.”

And the only thing I know to do is to look at them in the eye and say, “That is the greatest gift that a fellow citizen can do for those of us who have been entrusted to lead our country.” And for that—[applause]. And so I thank thanks—I say thanks to the millions of Americans who pray each day for our Nation, our troops, and our elected leaders.

Prayer is a gift from Almighty God that transforms us, whether we bow our heads in solitude or offer swift and silent prayers in times of trial. Prayer humbles us by reminding us of our place in creation. Prayer strengthens us by reminding us that God loves and cares for each and every soul in His creation. And prayer blesses us by reminding us that there is a divine plan that stands above all human plans.

In the stillness and peace of prayer, we surrender our will to God’s will, and we learn to serve His eternal purposes. By opening ourselves to God’s priorities, our hearts are stirred, and we are inspired to action—to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to a widow or to an orphan or to the less fortunate.

On this day, we also remember that we are a people united by our love for freedom, even when we differ in our personal beliefs. In America, we are free to profess any faith we choose—or no faith at all. What brings us together is our shared desire to answer the call to serve something greater than ourselves.

Over the past 5 years, I have watched the American people answer this call. Some serve their fellow man on distant shores, placing themselves in harm’s way so that others might live in freedom. Others serve in our Nation’s armies of compassion, bringing comfort and kindness to suffering communities at home and abroad. In millions of acts of service, the American people have shown the good heart of our Nation.

From our Nation’s prayerful beginnings, America has grown and prospered. Through prayer, we humbly recognize our continued dependence on divine providence.

I want to thank you all for keeping prayer a part of our national life. May God bless each one of you, and may God continue to bless our Nation.

And now it is my honor to welcome Reverend Jay Dennis.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to James Dobson, husband of National Day of Prayer chairman Shirley Dobson; Vonette Bright, former chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force; Marilyn Blackaby, wife of Henry T. Blackaby, honorary chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force; Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America; Rabbi Sholom Ciment, director, Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Boynton, Boynton Beach, FL; Father Charles P. Connor, pastor, St. Rose of Lima Church, Carbondale, PA; Rev. Jay Dennis, pastor, First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, FL; gospel music entertainer Rebecca St. James; and entertainer Gail Richardson.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay

May 4, 2006

President Bush. *Bienvenidos.* It’s been a distinct pleasure to welcome the President to the Oval Office. We’ve had a very extensive conversation about—we talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about the human condition. We talked about our mutual desire to improve lives through good education and health care. I assured the President that the billions of dollars of aid that we spend in the neighborhood are all aimed at justice and giving people a chance to realize their dreams.

We talked about ways to make sure there’s better student exchanges between our countries. It made a lot of sense; after all, the President was educated—or received some education in my home state of Texas, at M.D. Anderson.

We talked about extending our commercial relations. One of the interesting topics that the President brought up was renewable energy, a subject that is very dear to my heart

and necessary for our country. And finally, I shared some thoughts with the President about my deep desire to help countries become free, so that this world is more peaceful.

I—in short, it was a very extensive dialog. And finally, he shared with me the joy of being a grandfather. Obviously, he's a good man, because he's got such pride in his family.

And so I welcome you here, sir. Thank you for coming.

President Vazquez. Mr. President, thank you very much for your kindest attention. It's, for us, a great opportunity to speak—but I speak Spanish.

President Bush. *Si.* [Laughter]

President Vazquez. *Y tu tambien.*

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I want to thank you very much for your welcome. This is one more show of friendship that has been a very deep friendship between our countries from the very beginning.

We've had a very kind and extensive exchange of opinions with President Bush. First of all, we recalled the bilateral investment treaty that was recently signed by our two countries in which we have—and we have now also agreed to work to expand, intensify, and strengthen our trade relations. In fact, our technical people are going to be meeting within the framework of our joint commission in a few months in Montevideo, and we've agreed that we are going to be kicking off work at that time.

I will not extend on the points that have—the items that have already been referred to by the President, but I do want to thank you very much.

And to the Uruguayan people who are listening to me, I want to say to all of you: Without exception, without exclusions, together, we will continue to work jointly on this path that we have undertaken in order to further the standard of life with our people, through education, through health care, through more and better jobs, and through decent salaries for all our people, and to truly insert Uruguay on the path of globalization.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. *Gracias, senior. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Vazquez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 4, 2006

Thank you. Please be seated. *Bienvenidos.* Welcome to the White House. I'm honored to have so many distinguished Hispanic and Mexican American leaders here for the Cinco de Mayo celebration. You may have noticed this celebration is not on the *cinco de Mayo*—[laughter]—it's on the *cuatro de Mayo*. [Laughter] It's such an important holiday, we thought we would start early. [Laughter]

I appreciate Hector, good to see you—head of the SBA is with us today. Gaddi Vasquez, thank you for coming. Thank you both for bringing—thank you for bringing your wife, Hector. I want to thank Anna Cabral, who is the Treasurer, and glad you brought Victor. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate the Ambassadors who have joined us—Ambassador *de Mexico* is with us today—*Embajador, gracias—y tambien, mi amigo*, the Ambassador from the United States to Mexico, Antonio Garza. Welcome you both. Glad you're here. I appreciate Eduardo Aguirre, Ambassador to Spain. Thank you for coming, Eduardo—Hans Hertell, the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. Thank you all very much for coming. Thanks for serving the country, and thanks for serving your country, Ambassador, as well.

I appreciate the military personnel who are here today. We're proud of you. Thanks for wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

Before I introduce our entertainer, I do want to share some thoughts with you about the importance of Cinco de Mayo, for it commemorates a joyful moment in Mexican history. Americans must understand that it was a time when Mexican soldiers won the Battle of Puebla and defended their independence. So, obviously, Cinco de Mayo is a day of special pride for citizens of Mexico, but it is, as well, for Americans. It is a reminder of