

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT OF PEACE  
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

THE ELLIPSE

5:50 P.M. EST

Mr. John Dickson, Mayor Washington, Mr. Ambassador, Secretary Kleppe, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

As we gather here before our Nation's Christmas tree symbolic of the communion of Americans at Christmastime, we remind ourselves of the eternal truths by which we live. We celebrate the virtues of the human spirit -- faith in God and love of one another, and the guiding principles of America -- liberty and justice for all.

In our 200 years we Americans have always honored the spiritual testament of 2000 years ago. We embrace the spirit of the Prince of Peace so that we might find peace in our own hearts and in our own land, and hopefully in the world as well.

Christmas is a celebration of love -- it is a time of joy, of giving, of caring. We renew, we demonstrate our conviction that it is more blessed to give than to receive, to believe than to doubt, to hope than to despair, to love rather than stand apart.

We are a national family called America. We come from varied backgrounds. We live in areas far apart from each other. We have different dreams. But we are united this Christmas by our common commitment to one another.

We have much to be grateful for as we enter this Christmas season. We are at peace, and through our efforts significant progress has been made toward a more durable peace throughout the world.

Yes, we have endured economic difficulties but our Nation and we in the American family can now look forward to a more prosperous new year, and on this eve of our Bicentennial year liberty and justice still burn brightly as the guiding stars of our Nation.

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We pray this Christmas not only for ourselves and our country but for all our brothers and sisters on earth. We ask for the strength and resolution to help lift the burdens of poverty, ignorance, hunger and disease from the minds and bodies of men and women and children everywhere.

As we enter America's third century, let us make sure we carry with us our abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of peace on earth and the living example of goodwill to all men and women. Let us join the great principles of our past, spiritual and temporal, with the great promise of our future.

With the help of God, America's third century will be our proud legacy to so many generations yet to come.

Tonight, as we light the national Christmas tree, Betty joins me in wishing all of you a very merry Christmas and a new year of peace and happiness.

Thank you.

END (AT 5:54 P.M. EST)