

September 26, 1976

PRESS POOL REPORT - Hyatt to St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, LA

There was a crowd of several hundred outside St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square, when the President arrived a few minutes before the start of services. They cheered when he came out of the limousine with Mrs. Ford and Rep. F. Edward Hebert of New Orleans. The President was greeted by Archbishop Phillip M. Hannan.

The congregation applauded as the President and the party entered the church and walked up the center aisle. The President was seated in the fifth pew of the church. Both Archbishop Hannan and the Lector (reader) welcomed the President and his wife to mass. The altar was decorated with red roses.

Archbishop Hannan said the President's visit completed the celebration of the Bicentennial year since the President of France visited the St. Louis Cathedral earlier this year and "we thought we ought to give equal time to our own President".

One passage from the Gospel had this interesting line: "Anyone who is not with us is against us."

Archbishop Hannan's homily (sermon) was a wide ranging message in which he quoted figures ranging from Karl Menninger to former Astronaut Frank Borman to Arnold Toynbee to the Prime Minister of Japan, but the principle line of his sermon dealt with individual commitment by people and their willingness to sacrifice for their ideals. His concluding sentence was, "God bless you, and especially you, Mr. President, in pursuit of your arduous duties. A prayer was also offered for guidance for the President in the petitions which follow the sermon in Catholic services.

The President left the church to the Star Spangled Banner and was cheered by between 1500 and 2000 people who gathered in Jackson Square. He did not work the crowd, but waved and got into the limousine for the return trip to the hotel.

John Mashek - U. S. News & World
Jones - CBS
Poe - Times-Picayune

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