

of one party and a Congress of another. Surely they did not do this to advance the politics of petty bickering and extreme partisanship they plainly deplore. No, they call on us instead to be repairers of the breach and to move on with America's mission. America demands and deserves big things from us, and nothing big ever came from being small. Let us remember the timeless wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin, when facing the end of his own life. He said, "It is wrong to waste the precious gift of time on acrimony and division."

Fellow citizens, we must not waste the precious gift of this time. For all of us are on that same journey of our lives, and our journey, too, will come to an end. But the journey of our America must go on.

And so, my fellow Americans, we must be strong, for there is much to dare. The demands of our time are great, and they are different. Let us meet them with faith and courage, with patience and a grateful, happy heart. Let us

shape the hope of this day into the noblest chapter in our history. Yes, let us build our bridge, a bridge wide enough and strong enough for every American to cross over to a blessed land of new promise.

May those generations whose faces we cannot yet see, whose names we may never know, say of us here that we led our beloved land into a new century with the American dream alive for all her children, with the American promise of a more perfect Union a reality for all her people, with America's bright flame of freedom spreading throughout all the world.

From the height of this place and the summit of this century, let us go forth. May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at the West Front of the Capitol. Prior to the address, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist administered the oath of office.

## Remarks at the Inaugural Luncheon January 20, 1997

Thank you very much. First let me thank Senator Warner and Senator Ford, Speaker Gingrich, Leader Gephardt, Senator Lott, Senator Daschle, the Inaugural committee for the wonderful job they did with the morning ceremony. I thank all the participants. My good friend Jessye Norman, thank you. You were magnificent. And I thank Santita Jackson and all the choirs who sang today. They were wonderful. And I thank my friend of nearly 25 years Miller Williams for that wonderful poem. I will take it as an admonition and keep it close to my heart. Thank you.

Hillary and Chelsea and I have had a wonderful day. We got up early and went to a church service, and it ran a little late; Reverend Jackson was speaking. [Laughter] It wasn't his fault; we all were carried away. And it put us all in the right frame of mind for this happy moment.

I feel a great deal of gratitude for many things, but Senator, when I heard you telling that fascinating story of the fight between President Roosevelt and Harry Byrd, Sr., I felt an enormous amount of gratitude that at least so

far you have not released the letter you made me write you to make sure we could hold this ceremony today. [Laughter] And I thank you for that.

We've been doing this a long time, our country has, and I just want to say to all of you that I worked for a long time on what exactly I would say today, and I believe it very much. I believe we're at a unique moment in history. I believe that the only problems we've never solved in America are the problems of the heart, particularly relating to race. We get better at them, but we've never quite gotten over it.

I believe that it is more possible to imagine our future and shape it now than at any time in the history of the country, with the exception of our entry into the industrial age, when we also had peace and prosperity, and our entry into the 19th century, when Thomas Jefferson decided to buy Louisiana, a decision that Senator Lott and I especially appreciate—[laughter]—and a lot of others.

So this is a unique moment. And because it is, to some extent, without precedent and