

‘We Pray, O God, for a Fresh Anointing’: National Prayer Breakfast Emphasizes Reconciliation, Hope

The 2021 National Prayer Breakfast took place in Washington, D.C., this morning, a tradition in which every president since Dwight D. Eisenhower has participated. This year’s event, however, went virtual as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The prerecorded breakfast was shared on C-SPAN beginning at 8 a.m. Eastern; the video is available [here](#).

Themes of reconciliation and hope resounded throughout the bipartisan event, chaired by Sen. Christopher Coons, D-Del.; Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C.; Rep. John Moolenaar, R-Mich.; and Rep. Thomas Suozzi, D-N.Y. The event opened with a video montage of former presidents and their words at the event in previous years.

Worship band We the Kingdom shared musical selections at various points in the breakfast, which also included a recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by contributors from across the globe, each praying in their own language.

The bipartisan emphasis continued throughout the breakfast, with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., sharing from the Sermon on the Mount and emphasizing that “loving your neighbor means working for social justice.” Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., pointed to the “same faithful God who is doing a work around us and through us” despite the unusual season, and emphasizing Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 5 that God has given us the ministry and message of reconciliation. Members from other members of Congress, including the event’s co-chairs, were interspersed throughout.

Former presidents Clinton, Bush, Obama and Carter all sent messages shared at the breakfast, Carter's in the form of a letter, continuing the general theme of unity. "As president, there was no greater gift than the prayers of the American people," Bush said. Both Obama and Carter pointed to the deep division in our nation, with Carter noting, "Today, we need unity in our land." Former President Donald Trump did not contribute to this year's event.

The National Prayer Breakfast also included a message from David Beasley, executive director of the World Food Programme, who spoke of the deep impact the pandemic has had on food supplies and said in his prayer, "When we fail to feed the least of these we fail to feed You." Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi thanked God for His blessings and pointed to the responsibility leaders have to care for "all of God's children, recognizing the spark of divinity within us all."

"We have no future without forgiveness," said Andrew Young. The former U.S. representative, mayor of Atlanta and U.N. ambassador spoke about the friendships he made as a part of the event through the years, adding that Jesus "promises we can prevail by the mercy and grace of God" and if we forgive others, "I guarantee we shall not fail."

"Jill and I are humbled by your prayers; they mean everything to us," President Joe Biden said in addressing the breakfast and expressing his gratitude for the organizers and participants. "We know this time is different," he said, pointing to the pandemic, loss of life, unemployment and other concerns.

"So where do we turn?" Biden asked. "Faith. Kierkegaard wrote, 'Faith sees best in the dark.' I believe that to be true. To me, in the darkest moments, faith provides hope and solace. It provides clarity and purpose as well. It shows the way forward." He continued the event's emphasis on reconciliation, saying, "These aren't Democrats or Republicans losing their

lives to this deadly virus. They are fellow Americans, fellow human beings.”

The closing portions of the breakfast included a replay of a segment of the poem shared by Amanda Gorman, the nation’s first youth poet laureate, at the recent presidential inauguration, “The Hill We Climb,” and a prayer by Rep. Val Demings, D-Fla. She called on God with praise and thanks for the privilege of worshipping and fellowshiping in the midst of a public health crisis, saying, “Help us, O God, to draw near to You, so that we shall draw nearer to each other. We pray, O God, for reconciliation. ... We pray, O God, for a fresh anointing to do your will—to serve You so that we will serve Your people. ... We pray this prayer in the name of the only one who can keep us from falling. We pray this prayer in the wonderful, in the precious, in the matchless name of Jesus Christ. Amen.” {eoa}

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