

Historically, not only Catholics, but all believers have found here the freedom to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, while at the same time being accepted as part of a commonwealth in which each individual group can make its voice heard.

As the nation faces the increasingly complex political and ethical issues of our time, I am confident that the American people will find in their religious beliefs a precious source of insight and an inspiration to pursue reasoned, responsible and respectful dialogue in the effort to build a more human and free society.

Freedom is not only a gift, but also a summons to personal responsibility. Americans know this from experience—almost every town in this country has its monuments honoring those who sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom, both at home and abroad. The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good, and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate.

In a word, freedom is ever new. It is a challenge held out to each generation, and it must constantly be won over for the cause of good. Few have understood this as clearly as the late Pope John Paul II. In reflecting on the spiritual victory of freedom over totalitarianism in his native Poland and in Eastern Europe, he reminded us that history shows time and again that "in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation," and a democracy without values can lose its very soul. Those prophetic words in some sense echo the conviction of President Washington, expressed in his Farewell Address, that religion and morality represent "indispensable supports" of political prosperity.

The Church, for her part, wishes to contribute to building a world ever more worthy of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. She is convinced that faith sheds new light on all things, and that the Gospel reveals the noble vocation and sublime destiny of every man and woman. Faith also gives us the strength to respond to our high calling and to hope that inspires us to work for an ever more just and fraternal society. Democracy can only flourish, as your founding fathers realized, when political leaders and those whom they represent are guided by truth and bring the wisdom born of firm moral principle to decisions affecting the life and future of the nation.

For well over a century, the United States of America has played an important role in the international community. On Friday, God willing, I will have the honor of addressing the United Nations organization, where I hope to encourage the efforts underway to make that institution an ever more effective voice for the legitimate aspirations of all the world's peoples.

On this, the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the need for global solidarity is as urgent as ever, if all people are to live in a way worthy of their dignity—as brothers and sisters dwelling in the same house and around that table which God's bounty has set for all his children. America has traditionally shown herself generous in meeting immediate human needs, fostering development and offering relief to the victims of natural catastrophes. I am confident that this concern for the greater human family will continue to find expression in support for the patient efforts of international diplomacy to resolve conflicts and promote progress. In this way, coming generations will be able to live in a world where truth, freedom and justice can

flourish—a world where the God-given dignity and the rights of every man, woman and child are cherished, protected and effectively advanced.

Mr. President, dear friends, as I begin my visit to the United States, I express once more my gratitude for your invitation, my joy to be in your midst, and my fervent prayers that Almighty God will confirm this nation and its people in the ways of justice, prosperity and peace. God bless America.

**RECOGNIZING NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS WEEK**

**HON. DAVID G. REICHERT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 16, 2008*

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, April 13–19 is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week—a week dedicated to public-safety telecommunicators who handle millions of calls every year with great efficiency. The selfless nature with which these public servants do their jobs is truly one of a kind. Since 1991, Congress has recognized their work. It gives me great pleasure to honor and personally say "thank-you," to the many men and women in my district and across Washington State that provide this valuable service to our communities each and every day.

As the former Sheriff of King County in Washington State, I worked alongside the men and women in our communications center, depending on them daily to provide me with the correct information in order to safely carry out my duties and keep our communities safe. I will never forget the great lengths the men and women at our communications center took to be sure I was okay after a head-on collision in 1991, and the care and compassion they showed me. After the collision, I was able to get out of my car and check on the others involved in the accident. I left my portable radio behind in the patrol car, not knowing that the men and women at the communications center were nearly in tears and beside themselves with worry, wondering if I was safe. It is a difficult and sometimes emotional duty they perform, not always knowing what's happening on the other end of the line because they can't see what's going on but can hear the cries for help and the commotion and confusion of the scene. I cannot adequately express how much it meant to me, knowing they cared so much about my well-being. The men and women at our communications centers are truly heroes to the law enforcement officers and citizens they serve.

A former Chief of Police in Colorado once wrote that dispatchers must possess, among other things, the humor of David Letterman, the endurance of the Energizer Bunny and the patience of Job. It is not often that such traits are found in one person. However, in my experience, to find such a person one need look no further than the telecommunications section of a local police, fire or Sheriff's office. These men and women work tirelessly with the heart of a servant; always ensuring the needs of the callers and the first responders they dispatch are met and placing their security above all else.

I encourage all my friends, colleagues, and neighbors to take a moment during this week

to thank a telecommunications dispatcher—let them know their service is appreciated and encourage them to continue providing guidance and help to their fellow citizens when they're most in need.

**HONORING THE VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI**

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 16, 2008*

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the visit of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict the XVI, to the United States. In addition to commemorating this Pontiff's first visit to our Nation as the spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church, today also marks the 81st birthday for his Holiness. The theme for the Pope's U.S. visit is "On Christian Hope," and on behalf of the more than 200,000 Catholic residents of the Fifth Congressional District of Illinois, I would like to welcome Pope Benedict the XVI to Washington, DC and the United States.

Pope Benedict the XVI was elected the 265th Pope in August of 2005. Since that time he has traveled to nations all over the world spreading the beliefs of hope, peace, and justice. Throughout his life the Holy Father has touched the hearts of millions. From his humble beginnings in Germany through his current role as leader of the Roman Catholic Church, his religious doctrine and his belief in faith, hope, and kindness have guided his commitment to the Church and people around the world. He has connected with Catholics and non-Catholics alike through his dedication for advancement of human rights for all people.

The Holy Father has been honored throughout the world as a leader on issues that affect people of all races, religions, and creeds. He is an advocate for the poor and the needy, the hungry and the old, the sick and the tired. The belief that all citizens of the world should have rights is not simply a religious belief, but a human belief and one that we as Americans should honor.

Roman Catholics make up over 20 percent of the United States population and over one-sixth of the world's population. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States operates schools, universities, shelters, and hospitals to help and educate people of this great nation.

Madam Speaker, the Holy Father is a dedicated servant to the Church and his followers, and we are proud to welcome him on his first visit to America. I wish him continued success in his efforts for human rights and spiritual advancement, as well as a very happy birthday.

**HONORING THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND RETIREMENT OF KEITH D. MCFARLAND, PH.D.**

**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 16, 2008*

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true public servant who has dedicated his entire life to higher education, Dr. Keith D. McFarland.