

be the mutual aim of those who, under the concepts of our Constitution, hold to differing political faiths; so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory. Amen. —Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953

. . . I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago. The world is very different now. . . . And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. —John F. Kennedy, 1961

For myself, I ask only, in the words of an ancient leader: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"—Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1965

Today, I ask your prayers that in the years ahead I may have God's help in making decisions that are right for America, and I pray for your help so that together we may be worthy of our challenge. . . . Let us go forward from here confident in hope, strong in our faith in one another, sustained by our faith in God who created us, and striving always to serve His purpose. —Richard Milhous Nixon, 1973

I am told that tens of thousands of prayer meetings are being held on this day, and for that I am deeply grateful. We are a nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free. It would be fitting and good, I think, if on each Inauguration Day in future years it should be declared a day of prayer. —Ronald Reagan, 1981

Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: "Use power to help people." For we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us to remember it, Lord. Amen. —George Bush, 1989

May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America. —William J. Clinton, 1997

We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with His purpose. Yet His purpose is achieved in our duty, and our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. —George W. Bush, 2001

May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America. —George W. Bush, 2005

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The Sustainer of Presidents

In 1789, George Washington addressed the legislators and citizens gathered in New York City to celebrate his installation as the first president of the United States. In this first inaugural address, he said;

. . . it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States. . . . You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.—George Washington, 1789



And apparently, the presidents to follow him would agree. Though we cannot be sure that every president was a true believer (not all of them even claimed to be Christian), nearly all of our presidents have acknowledged the sovereignty of God and asked for His help from the first day of their administrations. Note these excerpts about God from presidential inaugural addresses.

And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessing upon this nation and its Government and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of His providence. —John Adams, 1797

I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are. . . and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications, that he will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do, shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations. —Thomas Jefferson, 1805

. . . with a firm reliance on the protection of Almighty God, I shall forthwith commence the duties of the high trust to which you have called me. —James Monroe, 1821

. . . and knowing that "except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain," with fervent supplications for His favor, to His overruling providence I commit with humble but fearless confidence my own fate and the future destinies of my country.—John Quincy Adams, 1825

Finally, it is my most fervent prayer to that Almighty Being before whom I now stand, and who has kept us in His hands from the infancy of our Republic to the present day, that He will so overrule all my intentions and actions and inspire the hearts of my fellow-citizens that we may be

preserved from dangers of all kinds and continue forever a united and happy people. —Andrew Jackson, 1833

So sensibly, fellow-citizens, do these circumstances press themselves upon me that I should not dare to enter upon my path of duty. . . did I not permit myself humbly to hope for the sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence.—Martin Van Buren, 1837

I deem the present occasion sufficiently important and solemn to justify me in expressing to my fellow-citizens a profound reverence . . . to that good Being who has blessed us by the gifts of civil and religious freedom, who watched over and prospered the labors of our fathers and has hitherto preserved to us institutions far exceeding in excellence those of any other people. . .
—William Henry Harrison, 1841

In assuming responsibilities so vast I fervently invoke the aid of that Almighty Ruler of the Universe in whose hands are the destinies of nations . . . With a firm reliance upon the wisdom of Omnipotence to sustain and direct me in the path of duty which I am appointed to pursue.—James Knox Polk, 1845

In conclusion I congratulate you, my fellow-citizens, upon the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of Divine Providence has conducted our common country. Let us invoke a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us from small beginnings to the eminence we this day occupy, and let us seek to deserve that continuance. . .—Zachary Taylor, 1849

But let not the foundation of our hope rest upon man's wisdom. . . . It must be felt that there is no national security but in the nation's humble, acknowledged dependence upon God and His overruling providence.—Franklin Pierce, 1853

In entering upon this great office I must humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties in such a manner as to restore harmony and ancient friendship among the people of the several States and to preserve our free institutions throughout many generations.
—James Buchanan, 1857

Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue. . . as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether."—Abraham Lincoln, 1865

Looking for the guidance of that Divine Hand by which the destinies of nations and individuals are shaped. . . Rutherford B. Hayes, 1877

I reverently invoke the support and blessings of Almighty God.
—James A. Garfield, 1881

Above all, I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people, and I

know He will not turn from us now if we humbly and reverently seek His powerful aid. —Grover Cleveland, 1893

. . . we may reverently invoke and confidently expect the favor and help of Almighty God—that He will give to me wisdom, strength, and fidelity, and to our people a spirit of fraternity and a love of righteousness and peace. . .
—Benjamin Harrison, 1889

Entrusted by the people for a second time with the office of President, I enter upon its administration . . . reverently invoking for my guidance the direction and favor of Almighty God.—William McKinley, 1901

My fellow-citizens, no people on earth have more cause to be thankful than ours, and this is said reverently . . . with gratitude to the Giver of Good who has blessed us with the conditions, which have enabled us to achieve so large a measure of well-being and of happiness.—Theodore Roosevelt, 1905

I invoke the considerate sympathy and support of my fellow-citizens and the aid of the Almighty God in the discharge of my responsible duties.
—William Howard Taft, 1909

I pray God I may be given the wisdom and the prudence to do my duty in the true spirit of this great people.—Woodrow Wilson, 1917

I accept my part with single-mindedness of purpose and humility of spirit, and implore the favor and guidance of God in His Heaven.
—Warren G. Harding, 1921

She [America] cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God.
—Calvin Coolidge, 1925

I assume this trust in the humility of knowledge that only through the guidance of Almighty Providence can I hope to discharge its ever-increasing burdens.
—Herbert Hoover, 1929

The Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways So we pray to Him now for the vision to see our way clearly—to see the way that leads to a better life for ourselves and for all our fellow men—to the achievement of His will to peace on earth. —Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1945

Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure. . . . With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace. —Harry S. Truman, 1949

Almighty God, as we stand here at this moment my future associates in the executive branch of government join me in beseeching that Thou will make full and complete our dedication to the service of the people in this throng, and their fellow citizens everywhere. Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land. Especially we pray that our concern shall be for all the people regardless of station, race, or calling. May cooperation be permitted and