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Diocese Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

White House News Photographers Association Dinner

Washington Hilton Hotel

Invocation

Friday, May 10, 1996

God, Our Father

We ask your blessing as the members and guests of the White House News Photographers' Association gather in annual assembly to break bread together and to honor those among their number who have merited significant recognition.

On this evening we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Association.

We thank you for inspiring that son of Blooming Grove, a former newspaperman and the then President of the United States, Warren Harding, to invite a weather-beaten cadre of still-photographers to abandon their vigil at its gates in favor of shelter within the walls of the White House. From these humble beginnings an alliance was forged between the making of history and the pictorial recording of its highs and lows.

Grant us, Lord, the wisdom to appreciate the dignity and sublimity of the vocation to which you have called us. We are in the business of highlighting the wonders of your creation and the follies of our age. We are the illustrators of our nation's pilgrimage within a colorful international procession. We are witnesses to patriotism and heroism, terrorism and tragedy. We have graphically represented the elation of success and the frustration of failure. For the generations of the coming millennium we have preserved the statesmanship and the posturing and the thrust and parry of Washington's political ethos. In the unending search for truth our spotlights have probed the strengths and the weaknesses of democracy and from things crass and beautiful we have fashioned a vision of that spirit which animates the soul of America.

We pray for President and Mrs. Clinton, the current occupants of the White House, and we ask you to bless Vice-President and Mrs. Gore, who grace our table this evening. Leadership is always a lonely and a demanding profession and it deters some. For those who aspire to it, Lord, we beg you to grant them nobility of purpose, clarity of vision and that courage which is the profile of integrity.

Bless in a special way our spouses and children whose bonds of love and affection provide that moral affirmation which is often our only worthwhile bastion of support in a madcap world. Let them freely indulge in being positively prejudiced about the quality of our work even when the more critical cast a cold eye on the products of our profession.

We commend to your compassion those of our number who have laid their cameras aside in responding to the inevitable dateline of eternity. Let them experience the loving kindness of your understanding so that the imperfections of their time among us may fade into the background

as the quality of their lives becomes the singular focus of your attention.

Lord be especially patient with us during an election year when normal complexity becomes organized chaos. support our morale when the candidates are late, their handlers are aggressive, the security is tighter and the coffee is always well past its prime! Along with the Secret Service we have shadowed Presidents who love to sail, to golf, to canoe, to ride, to fish, and to jog -- in your providence, save us from those who may be addicted to sky diving and bungee jumping! Comfort us always with the dream that one of us may be at the right place at the right time with the right equipment and in the right light so that the most awe-inspiring and emotionally-laden photograph of this dying century may be born.

Yes, Lord, we know that dreams can be insubstantial but they are the catalyst of our national enterprise and the reason we must always walk towards a brighter dawn.

Never allow us to lose our dreams.

And now, Lord, bless the more substantial food we are about to eat and match it with a lively sharing of conversation and joy which is truly reflective of all that we know about you, our God of Life and Love.

AMEN