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A Prayer for President Obama

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Our Father, Lord of all creation, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: We pray today with a sense of special urgency and responsibility. We come before you to pray for our new President, Barack Obama, and for all those in this new administration who now assume roles of such high responsibility.



We know that you and you alone are sovereign; that you rule over all, and that you alone are able to keep and defend us. We know that our times are in your hands, and that “the king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord” [Proverbs 21:1]. Our confidence is in you and in you alone. We come before you as a people who acknowledge our constant need for your provision, wisdom, and protection.

Father, we pray today for Barack Obama as he takes office as President of the United States. We pray that you will show the glory of your name in our times and in these days, confounding the wisdom of the wise, thwarting the plans of the arrogant, and vindicating those who do justice and practice righteousness.

Father, we pray with thanksgiving for the gift of government and the grace of civic order. Thank you for giving us rulers and for knowing our need for laws and ordered life together. Thank you for this nation and the blessings we know as its citizens. Thank you for freedoms unprecedented in human history. We understand that these freedoms come with unprecedented opportunities.

Lord, we pray with thanksgiving for the joy and celebration reflected on millions of faces who never expected to look to the President of the United States and see a person who looks like themselves. Father, thank you for preserving this nation to the moment when an African-American citizen will take the oath of office and become our President. Thank you for the hope this has given to so many, the pride emerging in hearts that had known no such hope, and the pride that comes to a people who have experienced such pain at the hands of fellow citizens, simply because of the color of their skin. Father, we rejoice in every elderly face that reflects such long-sought satisfaction and in every young face that expresses such unrestrained joy. May this become an open door for a vision of race and human dignity that reflects your glory in our differences, and not our corruption of your gift.

Father, protect this president, we pray. We pray that you will surround this president and his family, along with all our leaders, with your protection and sustenance. May he be protected from evil acts and evil intentions, and may his family be protected from all evil and harm.

We pray that the Obama family will be drawn together as they move into the White House, and that they will know great joy in their family life. We are thankful for the example Barack and Michelle Obama have set as parents. Father, protect those precious girls in every way — including the protection of their hearts as they see their father often criticized and as he is away from them on business of state. May their years in the White House bring them all even closer together.

Father, we pray for the safety and security of this nation, even as our new president settles into his role as Commander in Chief. We know that you and you alone can be our defense. We do not place our trust in horses or chariots, and we pray that you will give this president wisdom as he fulfills this vital responsibility.

Father, grant him wisdom in every dimension of his vast responsibility. Grant him wisdom to deal with a global financial crisis and with the swirling complex of vexing problems and challenges at home and abroad. May he inspire this nation to a higher vision for our common life together, to a higher standard of justice, righteousness, unity, and the tasks of citizenship.

Father, we pray that you will change this president's heart and mind on issues of urgent concern. We are so thankful for his gifts and talents, for his intellect and power of influence. Father, bend his heart to see the dignity and sanctity of every single human life, from the moment of conception until natural death. Father, lead him to see abortion, not as a matter of misconstrued rights, but as a murderous violation of the right to life. May he come to see every aborted life as a violation of human dignity and every abortion as an abhorrent blight upon this nation's moral witness. May he pledge himself to protect every human life at every stage of development. He has declared himself as an energetic defender of abortion rights, and we fear that his election will lead directly to the deaths of countless unborn human beings. Protect us from this unspeakable evil, we pray. Most urgently, we pray that you will bring the reign of abortion to an end, even as you are the defender of the defenseless.

Father, may this new president see that human dignity is undermined when human embryos are destroyed in the name of medical progress, and may he see marriage as an institution that is vital to the very survival of civilization. May he protect all that is right and good. Father, change his heart where it must be changed, and give him resolve where his heart is right before you.

Father, when we face hard days ahead — when we find ourselves required by conscience to oppose this president within the bounds of our roles as citizens — may we be granted your guidance to do so with a proper spirit, with a proper demeanor, and with persuasive arguments. May we learn anew how to confront without demonizing, and to oppose without abandoning hope.

Father, we are aware that our future is in your hands, and we are fully aware that you and you alone will judge the nations. Much responsibility is now invested in President Barack Obama, and much will be required. May we, as Christian citizens, also fulfill what you would require of us. Even as we pray for you to protect this president and change his heart, we also pray that your church will be protected and that you will conform our hearts to your perfect will.

Father, we pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, the ever-reigning once and future King, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He and he alone can save, and his kingdom is forever. Above all, may your great name be praised. Amen.

Christians are, first of all, citizens of a heavenly kingdom. The followers of Christ know no allegiance of ultimate rank to any government or earthly authority. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that God has given us the gifts of law, government, and ruling authorities for our good. We are instructed to pray for “rulers and all who have authority” and to be faithful in praying “so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives full of worship and respect for God” [1 Timothy 2:2].

As Barack Obama prepares to take the oath of office and become the 44th President of the United States, Christians should be thinking about how to pray for the new President. I offer this prayer as a place to start, as we observe the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States together.

