

time, it will be a monument for all time. It will do more than simply keep those memories alive.

Just like the Air and Space Museum challenges us to set our sights higher, or the Natural History Museum encourages us to look closer, or the Holocaust Museum calls us to fight persecution wherever we find it, this museum should inspire us as well. It should stand as proof that the most important things in life rarely come quickly or easily. It should remind us that although we have yet to reach the mountaintop, we cannot stop climbing.

And that's why, in moments like this, I think about Malia and Sasha. I think about my daughters, and I think about your children, the millions of visitors who will stand where we stand long after we're gone. And I think about what I want them to experience. I think about what I want them to take away.

When our children look at Harriet Tubman's shawl or Nat Turner's Bible or the plane flown by Tuskegee Airmen, I don't want them to be seen as figures somehow larger than life. I want them to see how ordinary Americans could do extraordinary things, how men and women just like them had the courage and determination to right a wrong, to make it right.

I want my daughters to see the shackles that bound slaves on their voyage across the ocean and the shards of glass that flew from the 16th

Street Baptist church and understand that injustice and evil exist in the world. But I also want them to hear Louis Armstrong's horn and learn about the Negro League and read the poems of Phyllis Wheatley. And I want them to appreciate this museum not just as a record of tragedy, but as a celebration of life.

When future generations hear these songs of pain and progress and struggle and sacrifice, I hope they will not think of them as somehow separate from the larger American story. I want them to see it as central, an important part of our shared story, a call to see ourselves in one another, a call to remember that each of us is made in God's image. That's the history we will preserve within these walls, the history of a people who, in the words of Dr. King, "injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization."

May we remember their stories. May we live up to their example. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. on the National Mall. In his remarks, he referred to France A. Cordova, Chair, Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents; former First Lady Laura Bush; and Lonnie G. Bunch, Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Statement on the Observance of Ash Wednesday *February 22, 2012*

Today Michelle and I honor Ash Wednesday with Christians around the country and across the world. This is at once a solemn and joyous occasion, an opportunity to remember both the

depths of sacrifice and the height of redemption. We join millions in entering the Lenten season with truly thankful hearts, mindful of our faith and our obligations to one another.

Statement on Tax Code Reform *February 22, 2012*

In my State of the Union, I laid out a blueprint for an economy that's built to last, where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone pays their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules. That includes a Tax Code that rewards

companies who invest and create jobs in the United States of America.

Our current corporate tax system is outdated, unfair, and inefficient. It provides tax breaks for moving jobs and profits overseas and