

Julie, thank you as well for coming. Gosh, I could have sat here and listened all day to your singing. [Laughter]

We've got a lot of military chaplains who are here. I want to thank you for your service to your country and to those who wear our uniform. You make a tremendous difference in the lives, the daily lives of people who are frightened and lonely and worried and strong and courageous. I appreciate so very much what you have done and will continue to do.

So many great events in our Nation's history were shaped by men and women who found strength and direction in prayer. The first President to live in this house composed a prayer on his second evening here for all who would follow him. Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, knew that his burdens were too great for any man, so he carried them to God in prayer. Over the radio on D-day in 1944, Franklin Roosevelt prayed for God's blessing on our mission to "set free a suffering humanity."

This past month has been another time of testing for America and another time of intense prayer. Americans have been praying for the safety of our troops and for the protection of innocent life in Iraq. Americans prayed that war would not be necessary and now pray that peace will be just and lasting.

We continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded and for the comfort of all who have lost a loved one. The Scriptures say: The Lord is near to all who call on Him. Calling on God in prayer brings us nearer to each other. After his son was rescued from northern Iraq, the father of Sergeant James Riley of New Jersey said, "We have been flooded with people's prayers. Everyone is praying for us, and we are so grateful."

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, many Americans have registered online to adopt a service man or woman in prayer. Others wear prayer bracelets to remind themselves to intercede on behalf of our troops. In Fountain City, Wisconsin, Lynn Cox has collected at least 80 Bibles to send to those serving in Iraq. In Green, Ohio, a group of parishioners at Queen of Heaven Catholic Church has made 2,000 rosaries for our troops. Margaret Brown, who helped start the group, said, "We want them to know that someone back here is holding them up in

prayer and that God is so powerful He can supply all their needs."

To pray for someone else is an act of generosity. We set our own cares aside and look to strengthen another. Prayer teaches humility. We find that the plan of the Creator is sometimes very different from our own. Yet, we learn to depend on His loving will, bowing to purposes we don't always understand. Prayer can lead to a grateful heart, turning our minds to all the gifts of life and to the great works of God.

Prayer can also contribute to the life of our Nation. America is a strong nation, in part because we know the limits of human strength. All strength must be guided by wisdom and justice and humility. We pray that God will grant us that wisdom, that sense of justice, and that humility in our current challenges and in the years ahead.

I thank you all for helping to keep prayer an integral part of our national life. May God bless each one of you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:47 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army; Shirley Dobson, chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force; James C. Dobson, founder and president, Focus on the Family; Luis Palau, president, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association; Col. Joseph Wallroth, USAF, Wing Chaplain, Andrews Air Force Base; and Julie Keim, soloist, Washington National Cathedral. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters Aboard the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*

May 1, 2003

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

The President. —No, it was not me.

Q. [Inaudible]—land it?

The President. Not my first time on a carrier.

Q. How was your—

The President. Really exciting. I miss flying, I can tell you that. This is a formal press

conference that you're now conducting. This counts.

Q. Not when we're dressed like this, it doesn't. [Laughter]

The President. That's right.

Q. Mr. President, when you were flying the plane, what did you do? Did you steer it?

The President. Just steer it.

Q. Did you go straight, or did you turn it?

The President. Straight.

Q. How did you do? Did you waver?

The President. Ask the pilot.

Q. He won't tell.

Q. How does it compare to the jets you used to fly?

The President. Huh?

Q. How does that compare to the jets you used to fly?

The President. Much more sophisticated.

Q. What's it been like here on the ship?

The President. Huh?

Q. What have you been doing on the ship?

The President. I've mainly been talking to the troops.

Naval Officer. Here they come, sir.

[At this point, a squadron of Navy fighter jets flew over.]

The President. The press conference is over.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 2:10 p.m. on the ship's navigation deck. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on AIDS Relief Legislation

May 1, 2003

The fight against AIDS is a moral imperative our great Nation must confront decisively and boldly.

I applaud the House of Representatives for acting quickly to pass historic legislation that is consistent with the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that I announced earlier this year. Today's action is an important step toward providing critically needed treatment

and care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and proven prevention programs for millions more who are at risk.

Time is of the essence, and I urge the Senate to act quickly so that we can turn the tide against this disease and give the hope of life to millions of people in the world's most afflicted countries.

Statement on the Senate Filibuster on the Nomination of Priscilla Owen To Be a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

May 1, 2003

Priscilla Owen is an extraordinarily well-qualified nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals. She has served with distinction on the Texas Supreme Court since 1995 and has strong bipartisan support including from three former Democrat Texas Supreme Court Justices with whom she served. She was unanimously rated "well-qualified" by the American Bar Association.

Justice Owen has been waiting nearly 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the United States Senate. The decision today by 44 Senators to filibuster and block a vote on her nomination is shameful. This obstructionist tactic is an injustice and unfair to this good woman and unfaithful to the Senate's own obligations.

Senate Democrats are now simultaneously filibustering two well-qualified nominees to the U.S. Courts of Appeals. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to exercise its advice and consent function and hold up-or-down votes on all judicial nominees within a reasonable time after nomination. Some Senate Democrats who once insisted that every appeals court nominee deserves a timely vote have now abandoned that responsibility in favor of partisan obstructionist tactics.

In October of last year, I announced my plan for timely consideration of judicial nominees. Today I again call on the Senate to end the delays and to ensure that every judicial nominee receives an up-or-down vote, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. Let each Senator