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# Word™

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## Renewing America's Promise

*Reflections on January 20, 2009*

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# RENEWING AMERICA'S PROMISE

The Presidential Inauguration will be held on January 20, 2009. A week of festivities will include the Presidential Swearing-in Ceremony, Inaugural Address, Inaugural Parade and numerous inaugural balls and galas honoring the new President of the United States.

The official theme for the 2009 inauguration is "Renewing America's Promise," a vision that underscores the President-elect and Vice President-elect's commitment to restoring opportunity and possibility for all and reestablishing America's standing as a beacon of hope around the world.

## Overview of the Inauguration Schedule

**Saturday, January 17** - Obama, Biden and their families will travel by train to Washington, DC and will host events along the way in Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore.

**Sunday, January 18** - An official welcome event will be held on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to kick off the inaugural celebration. The event will be open to the public.

**Monday, January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** - To honor Dr. King's legacy, Obama, Biden and their families will participate in activities dedicated to serving others in communities across the Washington, DC area. Additional events will be held throughout the week.

Inaugural Eve Concert for America's Children - A free youth concert will be held at the Verizon Center. The concert will be free, but tickets will be required.

**Tuesday, January 20 - Inauguration Day** - Swearing-in ceremony, Inaugural Parade, and official Inaugural Balls.

With the election of Barack Obama - the first black president in America - inaugural events are expected to draw record breaking crowds to Washington, DC. Getting around the region throughout the four-day inaugural weekend will be challenging. Washington Metro is gearing up for the events with increased hours and security.

## Inauguration Swearing-in Ceremony

January 20, 2009 - The oath of office will be administered on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC.



**TIME:** Gates to the Inaugural Swearing-in Ceremony open at 9 a.m. and the musical prelude begins at 10 a.m. Ceremony begins at noon.

**TICKETS:** Each Senator and Representative receives a limited quantity of free tickets that they may distribute to the public at their discretion. **The public should be aware that no website or other ticket outlet actually has inaugural swearing-in tickets to sell, regardless of what they may claim.**

**Those who come to witness the swearing-in ceremony will be able to watch and listen to the ceremony on large screens that will be set up along the National Mall.**

Following the oath of office, the President will give his inaugural address, setting out his vision for America and goals for the nation. After the Inauguration ceremonies, the President and the Vice-President will attend an inaugural luncheon in the Capitol's Statuary Hall.

## Presidential Inauguration Parade

January 20, 2009, 2:30 p.m. **Tickets are not required.** The public will not be allowed to lineup along the parade route before 7 a.m.

Location: Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC

Viewing stands and bleachers will extend from 3rd to 17th Sts.

## Inauguration Balls

Many inaugural balls and galas will take place at venues throughout Washington, DC from January 15 - 24, 2009. The official balls are planned by the Presidential Inaugural Committee and unofficial balls and parties are planned by the State Societies of Washington, DC and a variety of other organizations. Dozens of events will be announced in the coming weeks.

If you would like to view a listing of some of the balls go to this link

<http://dc.about.com/od/specialevents/a/inauguralballs.htm>



# A PROMISE OF HOPE

Barack Obama will become the first African American to be sworn in as President of the United States of America on January 20, 2009. This will be a day remembered for generations to come.

President-elect Obama and his historic election has been discussed at length. Everyone it seems has been sharing their opinions and feelings. President Obama's organizational skills have been very much in evidence in the days following his election. His style has given the vast majority of Americans a reason to hope in a future and a new direction.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this new hope provided by President-elect Obama has been his constantly repeating the word **WE**. In his speeches Obama uses the word **WE** much more than **I**. In his campaign one would hear him use the word **WE** far more often than opponents.

We here at **IN A WORD** believe the emphasis on the collective making a new future is key in forging a new direction for America. For the past 27 years **IN A WORD** has repeatedly pointed to dramatic changes in our American culture. The diversity of peoples has never been more evident in our world. To accept people who are different than myself and collaborate with those who have opinions contrary to mine is crucial to making this a better world. Sadly, the acceptance of others who are different has not been much in evidence in the past ten years of talk radio and internet usage.

The family has been greatly affected by the bias and prejudice towards others. Our front cover photo features Robert and Kefla Brown holding their son, Seth. They are a family like other contemporary young families who ponder the future for they and their children.

Our young parents in the year 2009 find themselves in a very divisive world. Robert and Kefla like many other young parents in America will have to teach



their young son to value others. They will have to provide him with values and principles based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. As teachers they have the awesome task of teaching their son to be responsible for others. He must learn to live with others.

President-elect Obama's emotional election night appearance at Grant Park in Chicago was a scene of what America is. There were present faces of many cultures and all were as one. This historic inauguration signals to all Americans a need to work together. No doubt President Obama in his inauguration speech on January 20 will use the word **WE** many times. The official theme for the 2009 inauguration is "**Renewing America's Promise**," a vision that underscores the President-elect and Vice President-elect's commitment to restoring opportunity and possibility for all and

reestablishing America's standing as a beacon of hope around the world

If anything worthwhile is to take place so our families and children will grow up in a world of possibility and opportunity then we must embrace the diversity around us. The same is true for our Catholic Church. If our churches are to grow and the faith strengthen then **WE** must accept diversity in our ranks. It is vital that the local churches and the entire American Catholic church accept the gifts of African American spirituality, Hispanic faith, Vietnamese and countless other groups. The strong demand for members of the Catholic Church to act in western European mode has to cease. It is not just a challenge for our Bishops but for all Catholics.

Will America rise to the challenge of President Obama to work as one? To make sacrifices? To share and listen? If Americans expect President Obama to solve all the problems by himself things will not change. As long as we have a "beneficiary" attitude the cycle of discord will continue. Are Americans willing to allow possibilities for all? Only time will tell.

## in a word or two

Cyprian Lamar Rowe, a social justice activist, poet, author and leading figure in the African-American Catholic community in the U.S., died Nov. 25 at Gilchrist Hospice Care in Towson, Md., after a long illness. He was 73. A funeral Mass for Rowe was celebrated Dec. 6 at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in Baltimore. Rowe is the former executive director of the Washington-based National Office for Black Catholics, 1978-80, and the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, 1981-83.



Josephite Father, the Very Reverend Robert Michael Kearns, S.S.J., 72, died December 6, 2008.



Father Kearns died of complications from cancer in a Mobile, Alabama hospital. He was a previous Superior General of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, the Josephites. Father Kearns, affectionately known by all as "Rocky" served most of his career in

Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, but also served Los Angeles and in the Mobile diocese.

Father Kearns was involved in numerous community activities. In 1983 he became pastor in Baltimore at St. Pius V and St. Peter Claver parishes. His pastoral efforts helped some major advances in the rehabilitation of housing for the poor in Baltimore. He was active with the Baltimore United in Leadership Development (BUILD) and its spin off, the Build Enterprise Nehemiah Development Corporation (BENDC), a housing initiative, and the Catholic Committee for Urban Parishes with a host of other diocesan and civic organizations.

In 1995 Father Kearns was elected Superior General of the Josephites. He would serve two terms until 2003, exercising his indomitable energy in several important ways, not the least of which was his deep compassion and fraternal care for the members of the Society. He knew instinctively that the Society's true

assets are its members and he took particular care in supporting them. All this, as he oversaw the building of a long overdue retirement and recuperation facility in Baltimore and a new faculty residence for the St Augustine High School in New Orleans. He facilitated the presence of the Missionaries of St. Paul from Nigeria as an aid to Josephites and to pastor parishes in several dioceses.

When his final term ended in 2003, Father Kearns turned afresh to a new pastorate, this time in Los Angeles at St. Brigid Parish where he was diagnosed with cancer. From there in 2007 he went to St James Major Parish in Pritchard, Alabama. Within a year the parish of Most Pure Heart of Mary in Mobile proper was added to his pastoral care.

### **The LOS ANGELES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONGRESS will be held in Anaheim, California February 26, 2009 (Youth Day) & February 27 - March 1, 2009.**

Sponsored by the Office of Religious Education at the Los Angeles Archdiocese, the Congress draws in excess of 40,000 participants over the course of this internationally acclaimed four-day event. The annual Youth Day draws over 15,000 youth. Congress' international presence continues to grow, with participants attending from over 14 different countries. This year there will be more than 306 workshops available to choose from, covering a vast range of topics and interests from spirituality and personal development to biblical studies, theology and catechesis. This year the Congress is scheduled for February 26 (Youth Day) and February 27 through March 1, 2009, with the theme "**Love Unfolding...Igniting Our Yes!**" Over the weekend participants will enjoy morning praise, workshops, evening liturgies and a variety of prayer experiences with internationally renowned leaders in the areas of liturgical music and worship. Noontime and evening concerts offer additional opportunities for praise and worship – delightful experiences which engage and renew participants!

Don't miss out! Register now for this spirit-filled and enriching weekend! For more information or to register call the RECongress info line at 213-637-7348. For more info or to register online by credit card visit us at [www.RECongress.org](http://www.RECongress.org).

**Divine Word Missionaries** is an international missionary community of over 6,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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