



Official Press Statement

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MEDIA CONTACTS: WardHill Omni Media
LaToya Henry, (313) 447-6404 (c)

A Pope For Such A Time As This **By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The visit of Pope Francis to the United States of America is indeed invigorating and historically significant during these most critical times. I listened with great interest as I sat next to the Dean of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., on the South Lawn of the White House. I could not help but notice Whites, Blacks, Asians, Native Americans, Latinos, persons of all faiths Democrats, Republicans, Conservatives, and Liberals many who often (verbally), violently disagree with each other, all listening to both President Barack Obama and Pope Francis. The two have turned the negative tide of historical correctness back to a place where it rightfully belongs, away from people of goodwill. As I witnessed a Pope from a non-European country and the first African American President together on the South Lawn of the white house, it just reminded me of the awesome power of God. The message from the Pope was one for all humanity. Respecting the poor, dignity for all people, protecting the very earth which God has given to the people as part of their divine duty to nourish and sustain, and above all, peace in a very violent world. It was indeed inspiring. President Obama set the stage as he spoke of the need for a nation not to be divided over religion, race, or economic status. Yet, our nation must fulfill its promise for the dignity and freedom of all people. He also petitioned to the world to remember the least of these, the immigrants, the refugees, the poor and those marginalized and often left out.

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Pope Francis even recalled to memory that he too was an immigrant and that our very nation was built by immigrants. I would also add lest any of us ever forget (on the backs and bones of enslaved Africans whose very spirits still cry out from the halls of the Capital that they helped to build). It is important for us to remember, just as Pope Francis so eloquently proclaimed years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Washington, D.C. to collect on a promissory note, and yet for some reason it came back marked "insufficient funds". Today, America has the ability and the opportunity to make a new deposit in the bank of freedom, justice, and equality for all. Let us pray and work with the intention that no future generation shall ever have to make a withdrawal from the bank of freedom and democracy, and the note comes back marked "insufficient funds".

Let us remember the words of scripture reflected in Matthew 25: 35-40:

"I was hungry and you feed me, thirsty and you gave me drink, naked and you clothed me, a stranger and you took me in, sick and imprisoned and you visited me, and the question was asked, when did we see you hungry or sick or thirsty Lord, and what did we do? The answer comes back, when you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me."

The Detroit Branch NAACP is the largest branch in the Association. For more information please call (313) 871-2087

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