

An Open Letter fo President-elect Barack Obama

Contributed by Administrator
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Dear President-elect Barack
Obama:

First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Michelle, and your two daughters for a convincing victory in last week's U.S. Presidential elections. Congratulations too to all those who made your victory possible: the Democratic Party machinery and the over 50% of the American voting population whose bright hopes of positive change for the future overshadowed the dark-shadowed baggage of the past. Kudos to all

Before I share my two cents' worth, I have to make a confession: I did not vote for you. The obvious reason is that I am ineligible, since I'm not a US citizen, but if I were one, I would have. This is a controversial statement for two reasons. First, I have never in my 77 years of life ever thought of becoming a US citizen. Second, I try to be a good Roman Catholic, and contrary to what the US Catholic bishops implored, I would have followed my heart and my mind and voted for you just the same, not just because you have helped Catholic church groups in your line of work, but because I find your way of thinking more catholic than many Catholics I know.

I was a guest of your beloved nation a few months ago, and I saw your campaign against Mrs. Clinton up close. I knew you would win because you had the stuff of a good politician: you were good at communicating, you had charisma, and your package was more complete. You are more representative of America than any of the other candidates. I knew you would win over anyone the Republicans would throw at you. It's unfortunate they decided on a ticket that had no chance. Such are the stuff of democratic elections: the US got the government they deserved.

Now, they've got you and

Joe for the next four years and, I hope, you do well to get another four-year term. I wish America and the world the best until 2012. I also hope that I would still be around to see the next chapter of the unfolding history with you as the leader of the world's incumbent superpower.

Aside from offering you my sincere best wishes, I would like to share my thoughts to help my fellow Catholics see the brighter side of what has happened. Several of my friends and family in the US supported you because they were convinced, as I still am and would always be unless you betray our collective hopes, that the good things that could come out of your Presidency would outweigh whatever negative perceptions the media has amplified.

That you and your party are pro-choice may have its metaphysical dimensions that make theologians quake in their professorial gowns: how, for example they ask, can someone who doesn't respect life be expected to lead the most powerful nation towards the common good? I think people who think this way do not understand politics, and they tend to simplify human nature a bit too much. Well, the US and the world survived eight years of Bill and Hillary, so I'm sure we can get along fine. On the contrary, it was during the eight years of the pro-life Dubya that the situation of the world got worse. Enough said.

If we learn from the lessons of history, we would see that it is the fate of every superpower to sow the seeds of its own regeneration or its eventual destruction. As a Harvard man, I'm sure you know what this means. Leadership is key, and I know in my bones and heart that you have what it takes to arrest the slide of America towards self-destruction, turn it around, and restore it to the path towards which a group of European pilgrims steered it almost four centuries ago. I'm sure that your familiarity with your nation's history – of a government by, for, and of the people, trusting in God – would be your best guide to accomplish the great task ahead.

Sir, you are the first African-American President in the long line of white Anglo-Saxon leaders of a nation founded by pilgrims. You, and your wife too, owe your lineage to pilgrims who left their native countries (perhaps against their will) to start a better life in the continent of dreams. You represent the fulfillment of generations of peoples of all races and creeds who fought for a better life against the tyranny of ignorance and power. Don't betray them. Don't betray us.

Your life's triumphant trajectory is a lesson to all that everything works for the good when people do things out of love. Your father having to leave his native land or Michelle's ancestors being kidnapped and bundled into a slave ship and sent across the Atlantic: what thoughts swam in their minds as they made their way through the sea! Did they say a silent prayer? If they did, they could have asked: My God, what good can come out of this?

Now, many years later, we know the answer. And I should say: it's very good indeed! This is the same message I have for those who feel depressed because you won. The best thing about democracy is not that people always get what they want, but that they are free to say what they think, and that they can make a difference, freely and without fear. And in a really healthy democracy, people can disagree openly without losing respect for each other. We may not agree with each other, but we can live and work together. We can be happy together.

Although we live tens of thousands of miles away, we know that having been born in Hawaii and educated in Indonesia, you are aware how your decisions would always find a way to have an impact on our lives. Please remember one thing you must have learned from your grandma: if you respect who and what we are as much as you want us to respect who and what you are, you will become a great leader, perhaps one of the greatest this world would ever know.

I am hopeful that in your American heart beats the same love for freedom that beats in the hearts of most people all over the world. Don't let tyranny rule you, and I'm certain that you can make America great again. I think you know what I mean. I also know that you have accepted the possibility that you would have to give up your life for it.

This is what I admire most about honest politicians: the rewards are not too great, but the risks are much greater. Few men have the guts to accept both. I admire you because you did. I pray that your first term be a success and that God keeps you and your family healthy, wise, and strong for the great trials ahead.

God bless America! God
bless President Obama!

Sincerely, Manoling De Leon