
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

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1929 November 10

Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York City, NY

At the Church of The Heavenly Rest, New York City, November
10, 1929

Massing of the Colors

We here take part in a beautiful and solemn ceremony, a ceremony which is not only beautiful as a symbol, but which is also a physical visualization of patriotism in its highest spiritual sense.

As one by one the standards of your organizations have moved forward to group themselves with our national flag, they bear with them a renewed vow of loyalty, of unselfish devotion, of true patriotism, from every member of each body they represent.

There is, I fear, too great a tendency to give to patriotism merely an interest in making our country unconquerable in war, a feeling that our chief aim is to see that our army and our navy are sufficient for our own protection. That is but a part of our patriotic duty.

Our country is in a sense continually at war against the ramparts of liberty, equality and justice on which our republic is founded. Surging constantly are the evil forces of greed, of materialism, of selfishness, headed by those who cynically deny that there is any prosperity that cannot be expressed in dollars and cents, or happiness except in bank balances. Continually they seek to sap, to undermine, to destroy finally those high ideals without which our nation can no more survive than could those great nations of the past, those nations whose bodies died because their souls were dead. It is our duty, as good soldiers of the faith, not merely to keep alive the memory of those who gave their lives for their country's safety, but to fight

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militantly, tirelessly, against the moral enemies of our republic wherever and whenever they appear.

Your flags have rallied around your country's banner. Make that no empty symbol. Move forward in your banner's path and underneath this, our country's symbol, consecrate yourselves to defend not only your nation's boundaries, but your nation's soul lest freedom and justice, equality and liberty should perish from the earth.