

December 24, 1938

[Christmas Tree Speech - Lafayette Park, Washington, DC]

FDR Speech File

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December 24, 1958

CAUTION: The President's Christmas greeting must be held
for release.

Release is automatic for ^{time} five o'clock (5:10) P.M.,
E.S.T., today.

NOTE: Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

- - - - -

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

CHRISTMAS TREE

Lafayette ~~PARIS~~ PMSK
DECEMBER 24, 1958

705-10000

SUGGESTED DRAFT FOR PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION IN PREPARATION OF HIS
CHRISTMAS EVE RADIO BROADCAST FROM LAFAYETTE PARK AT 5:11 P.M., E.S.T.,
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1938.

~~With the rest of the world we celebrate tonight the birth of the
Prince of Peace. A world weary of strife turns again for surcease of
sorrow to the Judean Hills.~~

~~Our thoughts take us through time and space back to the Holy
Land of the first Christmas, a country small in area but set apart from
the dawn of history to be the battleground of empires, the theatre of great
events. Here the Divine Purpose was accomplished nineteen hundred years ago
when in a stable in Bethlehem the Christ Child was born. And on that Holy
Night the Angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds keeping the night
watches over their flock: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of
David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."~~

~~The Desire of the Everlasting Hills had come and from that little
town of Bethlehem so near to all our hearts we receive again tonight a message
of joy which neither tribulation, nor sorrow, nor war, nor rumors of war
can mar. We lift our hearts in joy and naught shall mar the beauty of this
hour.~~

Tonight is Christmas Eve.

~~I want to give you the picture in Washington on this happy Christmas~~

~~We are gathered again around our Community Tree here in Lafayette Park,
across the street from the White House. Darkness has fallen over the Capital
but all about us shine a myriad of brilliant lights, ^{All our} ~~and~~ ^{hearts} ~~and~~ ^{are} warmed
by the eternal fire of Christmas, ~~and~~ ^{we} rejoice because new
life, ~~and~~ ^{new} hope, ~~and~~ ^{new} happiness are ~~in~~ ^{in them}.~~

~~In this setting I wish my fellow countrymen everywhere a Merry
Christmas with peace, content ~~and~~ ^{and} happiness and friendly cheer to all. I
wish also to thank the thousands who have remembered me ^{and my family} ~~me~~ this Christmas with
individual greetings. ^{all} ~~I~~ shall always treasure these friendly messages.~~

~~That very number precludes individual acknowledgment but I do want to assure
all of my friends of my heartfelt appreciation of their ~~presence~~ ^{kind}~~

~~outpouring of kindness is another witness to the abundance of good in this old world of ours. We are thankful for these hidden springs of happiness and love which the coming of Christmas always brings forth.~~
^{At this time}
 In this great holiday happiness let us hope that the boon of peace which we in this country and in the whole Western Hemisphere enjoy under the Providence of God may likewise be vouchsafed to all nations and all peoples. We desire peace. We shall work for peace. ~~We seek no conquest nor have we any imperial designs or ambitions.~~ We covet neither the lands nor the possessions of any other nation or people.

We of the Western World who have borne witness by works as well as words to our devotion to the cause of peace, ought to take heart tonight from the atmosphere of hope and praise in which representatives of twenty-one free republics are now assembled in the Pan American Conference at Lima, Peru. I consider it a happy circumstance that these deliberations ~~have~~ ^{will be successful} concluded ~~soon~~ ²⁰⁻⁰⁻¹¹ after the birthday of the Prince of Peace. ~~This~~ ^{It} is indeed a holy season in which to work for ~~peace~~ ^{good} will among men. We ~~should~~ derive new strength ~~and~~ new courage for our work from the spirit of Christmas.

We do not expect a new Heaven and a new Earth overnight, but in ~~faithful service~~ ^{and other hands} our own land, ~~wherever~~ wherever men of good will listen to our appeal, ^A we shall work as best we can with the instruments at hand to banish hatred, greed and covetousness from the heart of mankind.

And so the pledge I have so often given to my own countrymen I renew before all the world on this glad Christmas Eve, that I shall do whatever lies within my own power ~~and the power and authority of the office confided upon me~~ to hasten the day foretold by Isaiah, when men "shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 1938.

Tonight is Christmas Eve. We are gathered again around our Community Tree here in Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House. Darkness has fallen over the Capital but all about us shine a myriad of brilliant lights. All our hearts, warmed by the eternal fire of Christmas rejoice, because new life, new hope, new happiness are in them.

In this setting I wish my fellow countrymen everywhere a Merry Christmas with peace, content and friendly cheer to all. I wish also to thank the thousands who have remembered me and my family this Christmas with individual greetings. We shall always treasure these friendly messages.

At this time let us hope that the boon of peace which we in this country and in the whole Western Hemisphere enjoy under the Providence of God may likewise be vouchsafed to all nations and all peoples. We desire peace. We shall work for

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We do not expect a new Heaven and a new Earth overnight, but in our own land, and other lands - wherever men of good will listen to our appeal - we shall work as best we can with the instruments at hand to banish hatred, greed and covetousness from the heart of mankind.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt

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