

RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER

Thank you, Angie. In the last two decades, we could not have accomplished what we did accomplish without your leadership and teamwork. You know my admiration and affection for you, as a friend, and to Robin, and in a way this is a good excuse for a birthday party celebration. Angie, please God, celebrates his seventy-fifth birthday, active in the service of his nation and in the service of humanity. And, we say to you: Good health, fruitful activity, and I quote, "Moses aged the blessing until a hundred-and-twenty."

(Applause)

Before I make the presentation to His Eminence Cardinal Casaroli, I want to say thank you to the Chairman. As you've heard, my friend Peter Grace has been with us and with me since 1968. A Trustee of the Foundation, he travels all over the world, but in twenty-four hours, we get our responses. He is a great American, a very pious man of the Catholic Church and leader of the Catholic Church. We are indebted to you for all your help and for your great service--not only to the Foundation, but to this country and to mankind. (Applause)

I saw a past recipient, Johnny Agnelli in Rome in July. He knew about the Honorees. And, Johnny Agnelli's word is a word. He said, "I will be there. I will work for it." And, not only is he here with us, but I remember when the Foundation was involved in supporting the victims of the Armenian earthquake, you, through your great industrial empire

were one of the first ones to come forward to aid the men and women and children in Armenia. May God bless all your work. You are an inspiration and you are, indeed, the towering figure in Europe today--and America is blessed to have your friendship all of these years. Thank you, Johnny. (Applause)

John Whitehead: Style, dignity, service, public service, a Former Deputy-Secretary of State, and now, a Trustee of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. We only have the best, and he is the best. John, thank you so much for all your efforts and your leadership and for that memorable occasion on June 1, during the Summit, when you and I sat at the Soviet Embassy and presented President Gorbachev the Gorbachev Scholarship of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. Thank you for your leadership. (Applause)

All of the way from Chicago, a former New Yorker, a great banker, Barry Sullivan, Co-Chairman, thank you so much for all your help and your support, and for taking a special interest on behalf of Jay Pritzker, Barry Sullivan. (Applause)

I'll get to the Honoree, but I do believe in Thanksgiving. And so, I publicly want to acknowledge our appreciation to that great intellectual Secretary of State, a man who has a vision, Henry Kissinger. (Applause) Henry, I want to thank you personally. Whenever we need advice and counsel, you are there. And, it is the best counsel you can get. And, this is not a commercial for Kissinger Associates.

Tom Pickering, our Permanent Representative in the United Nations, a diplomat's diplomat, we have known each other for many years, going back to El Salvador, Israel--we're delighted to have you at the United Nations at this critical time when you so masterfully put together the consensus. And, when I congratulated you for putting together the consensus against this butcher of Baghdad, then you kindly in humility said to me, "It's not me. Tell it to the boss." Ambassador Pickering, thank you for being here with us. (Applause)

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, Your Graces, ladies and gentlemen, and dear friends, in Judaism, we have a tradition of reciting a blessing at a milestone occasion. In Hebrew we thank God: "Blessed art Thou Lord, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive and has enabled us to witness occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation."

I want to go back in history. It was 1964. Krushchev was in power. And, although Krushchev was considered a precursor of Gorbachev, Krushchev was also determined to destroy any form of religious life, including the Russian Orthodox Church (and I'm glad that Archbishop Macari is here) by 1980. And, just as he was threatening to bury us, bury America, he was determined to bury religious life in the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc.

As a Holocaust survivor, I felt that silence cost too many precious lives, and therefore, action was required. So,

I turned to Father Thurston Davis, the Editor-in-Chief of America, Jesuit priest. I reached out to my friend Congressman Frances Dorn, whose son is now Secretary of the Foundation, to Harold Bosley of Christ Church Methodist, and then, to Dr. David Read of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. And this small team were the backing of the late Ken Keating who was our first Chairman, a Former Senator, took a trip to the Soviet Union. Our first mission, in December 1965. And, we met then the Vice Chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs, who controlled religious affairs. We met at his office and he said to us, "What are you here for? Religion? That's for old people. And, when they die, that's the end of it."

Try to remember that the cover of Time Magazine in 1965 said "God Is Dead." But, God is very much alive, isn't he? And, miracles have been performed. And, let's not take all the credit. But there is a divine guardian of history who understands that man yearns, not only for bread, but the soul also has to be nourished. So, we left Moscow quite discouraged. The fear, the trembling on the part of the Asian believers with no religious education.

We stopped off in Rome. And there, we met the young Under-Secretary in charge of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for the Holy See, Agostino Casaroli. So, we go back to 1966. And, Your Eminence, I shall never forget what you said to me: "Rabbi, you have embarked on a mission that calls for

patience, perseverance, and patience." And, Your Eminence, I've been a good student and you've been a good teacher. There's no one who has had more creativity and imagination in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union than our Awardee, His Eminence Cardinal Casaroli. And, this has been our motto: "Patience, perseverance, and patience."

I'm glad to see our Ambassador of the United States to the Soviet Union, Ambassador Matlock and Rebecca here, Ambassador Thomas and Mrs. Thomas of Hungary. And, they will tell you and His Eminence will tell you over the years how we pleaded for prayer books, for bibles, for the training of rabbis, and the appointment of bishops in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. And, the arduous negotiations, and the tokenism, and the struggle. But look, who would have thought, in 1965, that we would be celebrating the introduction of a new law on freedom of conscience in the Soviet Union? Who would have thought that those horrible ministries of religious affairs that choked religion would be eliminated?

Step by step--it took patience and perseverance--and we have seen the work accomplished. But, we have a long way to go. And, Cardinal Casaroli deserves a great deal of credit. He had the ability, the personal diplomacy, and the understanding to move from confrontation into dialogue--and inch by inch, we gained. And now, you find religious freedom in most of Eastern Europe. But, you'll find also as a result of so many years of oppression, we see alarmingly,

particularly at a time of economic destabilization, a time when there is turmoil and uncertainty in that region, when men and women who walked on crutches all these years are not used to the freedom they've gained. We see, unfortunately, the eruption of ethnic strife and conflict--and, Archbishop McCarrick has just returned with me from an Appeal of Conscience delegation to Yugoslavia, Romania, and Hungary--and we have concerns that a new ethnic tribalism will emerge. And, this is why religious leaders must do everything possible not to fuel extreme nationalism, but to moderate it--to exercise self-discipline and self-restraint, so that the demagogues who try to take advantage, or the terrible economic and political suffering of all these years, that there be a moral rejuvenation. And, the churches have the opportunity--church, synagogue, and mosque--to show the leadership in the rebuilding of those societies.

His Eminence has been an inspiration, not only in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, he was the one to negotiate the agreements between Holy See and Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and in many visits to Poland. But, we were together at the Millennium of the Russian Orthodox Church. We spoke, if you recall, Your Eminence, at the Bolshoi. And, the significant guest that day was Raisa Gorbachev, who sat throughout the entire proceeding. And, during that visit, for the first time, Michael Gorbachev met His Eminence. And, I still remember the first page of Pravda, a picture of

Gorbachev and His Eminence on the first page of every Soviet paper. It was a turning point. And now, there are official relations between the Soviet Union and the Holy See.

Your Eminence, we salute you as a statesman rooted in spiritual values, who has made significant contributions to religious freedom, human rights, peace, and international cooperation. And, I personally thank you for having given me the advice and counsel and the inspiration to persevere and to persist so that our co-religionists in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe again may be able to worship their God and do service to mankind.

May I ask you, at this time, to please rise. (Applause)

May I ask Chairman Agnelli and Dr. Henry Kissinger and Angie and Peter and Jay to join us. The same inscription: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Presented to Agostino Casaroli on this day, October 29, 1990." And, may you continue to be a blessing to all of us. Thank you. (Applause)