

Lesson in Democracy

Election 2004 is over, and Americans can be proud that another demonstration of democracy in action has taken place -- and the world has seen how it should work. President George W. Bush was re-elected to the White House. On Wednesday, he vowed to fulfill the duty Americans have bestowed upon him for another four years.

"America has spoken, and I'm humbled by the trust and confidence of my fellow citizens," he said. "With that trust comes a duty to serve all Americans, and I will do my best to fulfill that duty every day as president." He then appealed to Democratic challenger John Kerry's supporters to help bring the country together.

Reaching the goals he has outlined, Bush said, "will require the broad support of Americans, so today I want to speak to every person who voted for my opponent: to make this nation stronger and better, I will need your support and I will work to earn it. I will do all I can to deserve your trust. A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation. We have one country, one Constitution and one future that binds us. And when we come together and work together there is no limit to the greatness of America."

The beauty and strength of this nation's democratic fabric was shown in the graciousness demonstrated in defeat by Senator Kerry, and his concern for the country above his own personal setback. He described his "good conversation" with President Bush as he conceded the race. "We talked about the danger of division in our country and the desperate need to find unity in our country. In the days ahead, we must find common cause, we must join in a common effort, without remorse or recrimination, without anger or rancor. America is in need of unity and a larger measure of compassion," Kerry said, adding that he hopes Bush will pursue that unity in the coming years and vowing to do his part to bridge the partisan divide.

Putting the welfare of the nation above personal agendas is a lesson that should not be lost on the world -- or on Americans. It is a characteristic that we all should adopt and practice.

And now it is incumbent upon all of us -- each and every one of us -- to pray for our leaders, for President Bush and his cabinet and staff, for the United States Congress, for our governors and state legislatures, for our city and county leaders that they may be guided by the hand of Almighty God as we seek to accomplish His will for our nation. Pray, too, for Senator Kerry and for the influence he will continue to wield because of the support shown for him by millions of Americans.

--Beecher Hunter