

*Traducción al Inglés. Para*

Inaugural remarks of Governor Luis Muñoz Marín, San Juan, Puerto Rico, January 2, 1957

The job behind us has been a hard and rewarding one. The job ahead of us is no less difficult and every bit as promising, I have long observed a notable fact about those who have much to do--they do not waste time in words. Therefore, I shall speak very briefly on this occasion.

I would like to convey my greetings to our guests from the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean and other countries who honor us with their presence. To all of them Puerto Rico opens wide the doors of its frank and simple hospitality. Their presence enhances the spirit of freedom to which we are devoted.

I wish to greet, with the most cordial sincerity, my fellow-citizens to whom I dedicate myself once more as their chief executive. There are fellow citizens who honored me with their support in the clean and just election recently held here. There are also those who, in the full enjoyment of their political rights, contributed with their criticism and their opposing votes to the democratic process of Puerto Rico. They, too, I salute, and to them, too, I dedicate my services. Without opposition and criticism the democratic process would be hollow and unwholesome.

Although the will of the majority is the basis of democracy, it is not the only basis. Another vital fundamental is the scrupulous respect that we must maintain for the rights of minorities, not grudgingly, clinging to the letter of the Constitution's demands, but liberally with the free will of the spirit as well.

*Texto completo en español, véase: LMM, Anuario de Declaraciones (1957)*

Our goal is the maximum respect for that maximum minority which is the individual.

In that connection it is worth remembering that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is the only government in the world that has called in an organization devoted to the maintenance and strengthening of civil liberties for consultation with us on how best to protect the rights of all who live within our borders.

On behalf of my administration I dedicate my associates and myself to a reexamination of the ways and means by which we undertake to fulfill the program our people have supported. We invite criticism, but in doing so we must not feel absolved from the duty of self-criticism.

We rededicate ourselves to a deepening of the assurance that our people feel in their own democratic vigor. As the growth of the Commonwealth concept adds new areas of authority, we must see to it that such authority shall be exercised to strengthen human rights. We must realize that these new areas of authority are not additions to the power of individuals in government but to the strength of the people to be expressed through their voting power.

We rededicate ourselves to all the ways of transmitting knowledge, or deepening understanding, of forging freedom in the human spirit. We will use the school, the university, and every modern technique of education, reaching right into the home and the market place, the shop, field, factory and office.

When we speak of education we must envisage something greater than the learning of skills and crafts and professions. We must think of development of the art of being good and rational citizens

in a difficult age, an age that challenges all the possibilities of the human spirit -- citizens of a Puerto Rican renaissance.

We must learn - and teach-how best to be citizens of a Hemisphere bent on two great and inspiring tasks. In the North it is trying to create peace, not merely avert war. It is groping for new expressions of the spirit through which to make greater use of its immense economic productivity.

In the southern part of the Hemisphere it is seeking the means of overcoming the great economic poverty of its people and of building up the democracy that is profoundly rooted in the collective aspirations of the people.

We rededicate ourselves, above all, to the unity of our own people. After every political campaign this rededication is necessary. Essential as they are to democracy, political campaigns are also a risk to democracy. There is always the risk that the passion of conflicting opinions may give individuals the feeling that they are members of different political tribes or clans rather than supporters of different programs, or different approaches to the same goal. The function of politics is not to divide a people by the diversity of ideas. It is rather to unite them by the right so to disagree.

Finally, we rededicate ourselves to an America that serves the free world and to a Puerto Rico that wants to serve, modestly and devoutly, the cause of good understanding among all the peoples of our Hemisphere, and then of all the peoples of the world.