

## **Blast From the Past: FDR**

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 13, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

“We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address is better remembered for its sonorous opening “The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself.” But these words at the end of the speech speak to the need of our own time, when the captains of industry and barons of high finance have failed so utterly, and only the government is capable of the kind of “vigorous action” for which the situation calls. Let’s hope that as the final vote on financial reform comes into view, the members of Congress will take the gift the electorate has given them and become an instrument of their wishes. And, let’s hope the President and Congress become less defensive about exercising the gift they were given by the electorate.

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