

God in America: Part II

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 13, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

The price of admission was met when the PBS special dealt with Lincoln and how the experience of the Civil War altered his religious convictions from a basic Deism to a belief in a providential, and loving, God.

They noted that you only have to listen to the lyrics of the Battle Hymn of the Republic to know that "God is entering history." They focused on the uniquely theological content of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, which remains the ur-text for American civic religion.

I wish they had focused more - or will focus in subsequent segments - on how paradigmatic Lincoln's experience was. It is suffering that moves us to embrace the God who suffered.

Before the face of evil, be it the war dead of Antietam and Gettysburg or the victims of the earthquake in Haiti, who can pray to any God other than the God who did not spare His own Son?

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