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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE ABYSSINIAN
BAPTIST CHURCH**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much. First, I want to give honor to God, without Him this day would not be possible. And it is an extraordinary joy and honor to join you for this 212th anniversary. Think about that for a moment. Over two centuries of extraordinary, good works that have happened in this church, a church synonymous with social justice, synonymous with racial equality, synonymous with economic empowerment, a place so important to this city and this nation. So, God bless you, and congratulations for 212 extraordinary years. We all know that leadership is necessary to make something great happen. And you have had a great leader in Reverend Calvin Butts.

[Applause]

And here's a man, when he has a vision, he makes it happen. When he believes something needs to change, he does something about it. When something isn't there, he creates it. In so many different areas of concern to the community, Reverend Butts has been there and in no place and no subject, has he been more powerful than his devotion to our children and their education, believing that we can, and we must do better for our children. And he has made that happen in this community and far beyond. Let's thank Reverend Butts –

[Applause]

And Reverend, I want you to know that our First Lady, Chirlane, and I are praying for your wife and have her in our prayers and thoughts for a full recovery. And everyone, look, what a day – what a day to be gathered together to celebrate an anniversary, but to celebrate the rebirth of our nation as well.

[Applause]

We all joined in congratulating President-Elect Joe Biden. Doesn't that sound good?

[Applause]

President-Elect Joe Biden. He is a healer. He is a moral force. He is a human being who cares for his fellow human being. Wouldn't that be refreshing? And it will be refreshing starting on January 20th. We congratulate Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris –

[Applause]

Who has done so much already in public life, but will do so much more and has flung open the doors of leadership so finally all can serve, all the talents of this nation can be represented in our White House. What an auspicious moment, but just a reminder of who did this, who achieved this, who made this happen? The people. The people made this happen, the people stood up, and I want to remind you all the people stood up and turned out amidst the greatest crisis in the history of this nation, at a time when you could have said, everyone might stay home, everyone might determine not to participate. In fact, all over this city, this state, this nation people set records for voter participation. How auspicious is that? And I'll say this, very quickly, this is also something our city should be proud of because our city has been through so much, haven't we.

We were the epicenter of the coronavirus crisis. We were carrying that burden more heavily than any city in the nation. And then we fought back. The people fought back. They put on those masks, they made the changes they needed to make in their lives. And we fought back that disease and we fought it back. We fought it back. We went from worst to first. What does scripture say? The first will be last, the last shall be first. That's what happened here in this city. We became one of the safest places in this country because of the people. And we have a challenge now, but we can fight it back again. They said we could not overcome the coronavirus, but the people did. They said we couldn't open our schools back again. But we did in New York City. The people did that. They said that no one would come out to vote, but the people did.

So, it's a reminder of the power and the strength of all New Yorkers. It's a reminder of the resiliency, the heart that is so much what makes this people work. It's not the sky, what makes this city work. It's not the skyscrapers. It's not the famous sites, the iconic sites that make New York City great, it is the people that make New York City great. And I'll conclude with this point because it is all about the people. Someone said to me a few days ago, they're worried about the future of New York City. And it was fair to be worried after everything we've been through. They were worried, and they said very innocently with a full heart, they said, do you think we can restore our former glory here in New York City? And I said, respectfully, that's the wrong question. It's not, can we restore our former glory, it's can we reach our greater glory, can we reach our ultimate destiny which is to be a city that is even fairer, to be a city that is even more inclusive, to be a city that welcomes everyone in to prosperity, to be a city that works for everyone. Yes. The answer is yes. We can reach that greater glory because our people have proven once again, in the year 2020, anything is possible New York City, anything. Because of the people that make this place great.

I thank you all. I congratulate you this beautiful day. What an honor to be with you. God bless you all.

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