

A Review of Vice President J. D. Vance's Remarks at the IRF Summit

By Marianna Richardson

Vice President Vance made an appearance and gave a significant speech at the IRF Summit. He pointed out that fostering a culture in which faith can thrive allows men and women to fully appreciate and respect the God-given rights of their fellow citizens. One of the wonderful apparent paradoxes of religion is that in connecting us to the sacred and to the universal, it deepens our commitment to our neighbors, to our obligations to one another, and to the individual communities that all of us call home.

Bringing It Close to Home

Vice President Vance acknowledged that the participants at the IRF Summit came from all over the country and the world. He reflected on the fact that his family growing up were Christians, but not regular churchgoers. His grandmother, who raised him, was a deeply faithful woman, but she was skeptical of institutionalized religion. His grandma once told him that in eastern Kentucky, where she grew up, even the Episcopalians were “snake handlers.”

Church is a place where people of different races, different backgrounds, and different walks of life can come together in commitment to their shared communities and their commitment to their God. It is a place where people unite not just in the pews but in their acts of service, rallying around one another in times of sickness or grief or celebration of new life.

Vance asked the question: “Are these not the kinds of bonds and virtues that lawmakers today should strive to cultivate?” He said that these principles were in the first Trump administration, and they will be even more so in the second.

The Current Trump Administration

Vance pointed out that this is only the third week of President Trump's second term, but this administration's intent is not just restoring but expanding on the achievement of Trump's first four years. This administration believes that we must stand for religious freedom not just as a legal principle, but as a lived reality both within our own borders and especially outside of them. He believes Secretary of State, Marco Rubio to be one of the great champions of religious liberty across the globe.

Final Thoughts

In his final remarks, Vice President Vance stressed that both at home and abroad, we have much more to do to more fully secure religious liberty for all people of faith. He expressed his gratitude for the painstaking work that everyone in the room has poured into that effort. He prayed that together we will be able to better protect the dignity of all peoples as well as the rights of all believers to practice their faith according to the dictates of their own conscience. He ended his speech with a thank you for those who work to preserve religious liberty, safeguarding the rights of faith communities across the globe.