

1965

Sunday, February 21st

We had a late breakfast and then, with the Marvin Watsons and Bill Moyers, drove out to Christ Church in Alexandria because the next day was George Washington's Birthday. We followed the tradition of all the thirty-five Presidents, save about three, in going to George Washington's church on the Sunday closest to his birthday. I have been very familiar with that charming old church as a tourist. It was on my route to Mount Vernon with innumerable constituents in the days of the House and the Senate. I particularly like the churchyard with its old English words: "uxor" for wife, "relict" for widow, and its description of the profession of the dead person. He was^ua noted distiller,^{ll} says one tombstone. And those doleful old lines, a typical one "As I am, you soon will be. Prepare yourselves to follow me."

The Reverend Sydnor, about six feet seven inches tall, towered above us, let us in to George Washington's pew. Lyndon sat where the first President sat. The Reverend Sydnor's sermon suited the climate and at least this part of his audience. He said practically this: "I am in the business of reconciliation -- reconciliation between members of the family, between regions of the country, between nations of the world." He was speaking of himself and of the Church. Later on Lyndon told him that he felt that he too was in that same business -- the sermon could

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have been written for him.

A delightful part of the service was the baptism of a little two-month-old girl named Dawn Elaine who, to my thinking, stole the show from the President, the Minister, and all assembled. She was alert, smiling, interested from beginning to end -- the most winning little baby you ever saw, never once alarmed at being handed into strange hands, sprinkled with water, and stared at by the whole congregation. Reverend Sydnor carried her down one aisle and up another. When he got to our pew he stopped, and Lyndon clipped his little gold tie-clasp with the LBJ on her dress. She rewarded him with an extra large smile later and it was all over. She was peacefully sleeping in her father's arms, a natural little star.

Back at the White House we picked up Him and Blanco and the Watsons and us -- Bill had gone home -- walked around the grounds, stopping at the East Gate to chat with the tourists while Him tried to pick a fight with a perfectly nice little Scotty and then raced off in pursuit of real or imaginary squirrels. He's the happiest little animal, and the joy of our life.

And then back upstairs for lunch with the Watsons and Lyndon. While at the table, there was a call from Mrs. Dirksen in Florida, and

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she sounded almost tearful. Senator Dirksen is ill. She wants to get him to Walter Reed Hospital as quickly as possible. Lyndon arranged to send a plane immediately. He should be in the hospital by 6:30 or 7:00 this evening.

After lunch Lyndon went back to his office and I went to the Bowling Alley with the Watsons. Lyndon joined us briefly, bowled a game and, after a bad start, wound up with two or three spares and a strike and beat us, much to all our pleasure.

In the late afternoon he and I took a nap, or rather a rest, and then we went to the Dillons for dinner. Only eight of us -- the Fulbrights were another couple. Phyllis has that rare and exquisite ability as a hostess to greet you as though it was the most delightful thing in the world that you were coming and it was going to be a great evening. And it always is at her house. Charming people, good conversation, delectable food. There were two lovely watercolors of her daughters signed "Uncle Dana," by Charles Dana Gibson. She looks so young! It is hard for me to place her in time when Charles Dana Gibson could have painted her two little girls.

She talked of Jim Forrestal, always to me one of the outstanding men I have known in the three decades I've lived here. How

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hard it will be to get someone to take the Dillons' place. But he is very tired and intent on leaving by April 1st.