Hi, everyone.

Traditionally, \_\_\_\_21\_\_\_\_ the year winds down, it’s a time for reflection – to give thanks, reconnect with loved ones, and cherish the more meaningful parts of life, removed from our usual day-to-day distractions.

Of course, the events of 2020 haven’t shown a lot of respect for our traditions. In a year of so much tragedy, it can be tough to give thanks when you’re doing your best to get by. And far too many of us will have to gather around a table with an empty chair, if we’re able to gather together at all.

One thing, though, we can say about 2020 is that it forced us all to cherish what is most important, what’s most meaningful in our lives. To stop taking things for granted \_\_\_\_22\_\_\_\_ truly matter. To be grateful for what we have, and to be alive to the pain of those \_\_\_\_23\_\_\_\_ (fortunate).

Throughout this challenging year, I’ve been moved, again and again, by the sacrifices so many were willing to make on behalf of others. The healthcare professionals who risked their lives to save ours. The workers who have kept our lights on and our shelves stocked, always essential to our economy, but finally\_\_\_\_24\_\_\_\_ (recognize) for it. The protesters of every race and age who saw injustice in their streets and their institutions and demanded change. And the less heralded leaders, the quiet changemakers who saw need in their own communities and leapt to address it. They checked in on their neighbors, delivered food and PPE to seniors and those experiencing hardship, offered mental health support to those\_\_\_\_25\_\_\_\_(recover) from trauma. \_\_\_\_26\_\_\_\_ holds this pandemic tore wide in our social fabric, these emerging leaders stepped forward to patch it up.

These are exactly the leaders Michelle and I started our Foundation to support. We always thought they\_\_\_\_27\_\_\_\_ (lead) us into a bright future, if only we \_\_\_28\_\_\_\_\_empower them, connect them with each other, and give them a dose of inspiration when they needed it.

What we learned in 2020 is that these emerging leaders aren’t just building a brighter future, they’re safeguarding our present. In hard times, they are the ones who’ve given me solace. It’s \_\_\_\_29\_\_\_\_sacrifice in which I found hope. And as we begin to close the chapter on a difficult year with encouraging news on the horizon, it’s their leadership \_\_\_\_30\_\_\_\_ will guide us today and tomorrow.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, everybody.

*--Quoted from Barack Obama’s Christmas speech in 2020*

21. as 22. that 23. less fortunate 24.recognized 25. recovering

26. Whatever 27.would lead 28.could 29. their 30. that