

Thus we find ourselves back at our starting point: the greatness of your country and the values that she embodies.

She has come from the depths of the ages, yet is always on the threshold of the future. France is here with us this evening in the person of her Prime Minister, who chose to make his first official trip to our country. In order to understand the emotion that moves us, remember that his presence evokes for us those spirits of France which have illuminated and inspired the world, from Molière to Diderot and Michelet, from Beaudelaire to Pasteur and Renoir, from Jaurès to Proust and Jean Moulin, and to many other giants of thought and heart, of courage and creation.

Because we have the audacity to claim that we go back to these giants, these witnesses to our commitment will also serve as reminders of that to which we must be faithful.

I raise my glass to your Excellency, to the President of the French Republic, whom I am eager to meet, and to whom I ask you to convey our respect and affection, and to eternal France.