

F. D. Roosevelt, Norman Rockwell & *the Four Freedoms* (1943)



Excerpt from Roosevelt's January 16, 1941 speech before the U.S. Congress:

“In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way -- everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want -- which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear -- which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor-- anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception -- the moral order. A good society is

able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change -- in a perpetual peaceful revolution -- a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions -- without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose.

To that high concept there can be no end save victory.”

From *Congressional Record*, 1941, Vol. 87, Pt. I.

Rockwell received over 60,000 letters and postcards offering thanks and encouragement. Included in this number was *one letter from President Roosevelt himself*.

Roosevelt wrote, “I think you have done a superb job in bringing home to the plain, everyday citizen the plain, everyday truths behind the Four Freedoms... I congratulate you not alone on the execution but also for the spirit which impelled you to make this contribution to the common cause of a freer, happier world.”