

## "Thoughts on Barack Obama's Re-election"

In recent correspondence a Brazilian friend reminded me of the poem I wrote after Barack Obama was elected on Nov. 4, 2008. It had been four years since I read it. Much has changed in our nation since that night when a jubilant America greeted the Obama family as the First Family. Unfortunately, our nation has not united as Mr. Obama and those who elected him hoped and bitter division characterizes political dialogue.

It used to be that your political party did not convey to those in the other party everything about you as a human being, did not cast you into the darkness where the unredeemed, the unenlightened, belonged. It used to be that the bumper sticker on your car didn't provoke hostility in those waiting behind you at the stop sign. It used to be that your political yard signs weren't ripped out of the soil as if they were the deep yearnings of your heart that had to be violently extracted. It used to be that people knew you loved your country (and your God) whatever your political affiliation. It used to be that people would listen to the other's case for their candidate.

Perhaps it's daring to say, but it's even become more difficult including friends of the "other" party within your circle. You so desperately want them to believe as you do. "How can they not see the light," you ask yourself? I know you know what I mean. We are suspicious persons to one another. (I can't imagine how much love it would take to be married to someone from a political party different from my own.) And while I'd like to think I'm not guilty, I know I am.

So now, four years later, the hard work remains for our president and for us as citizens. Can we learn to trust each other again? Because, surely, we can't expect Congress to heal the wounds unless we, the people, drop our armor and jousting sticks and recognize the good in each other. Can we, for example, give just a little? Can we look for the germ of truth in each other's thinking? Can we listen with our hearts? Do we have the wisdom to isolate those powerful media personalities who foment hatred rather than each other? Can we heed, instead, those who look for common ground, a starting place for agreement? Maybe each of us could make a pledge to ourselves to start trying. (I've attached the poem I wrote four years ago as a reminder of the hope that filled us then.)

May each of you be a blessing to each other and to the world,

Patricia