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DNC Prayer: Day 1

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NCR Today

I was so wowed by Michelle Obama's speech last night that I almost forgot to stick around for the closing benediction. Though she didn't upstage the First Lady, young Episcopalian Jena Lee Nardella did a beautiful job closing the first night of the Democratic National Convention.

Nardella, founder of Blood Water Mission, which works to address the HIV/AIDS and water crises in Africa, prayed for both Obama and Romney, calling for both of them to "seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly" (Michah 6:8).

Her prayer urged civility and humility throughout the election, noting that "In rural Africa I am witness to thousands of HIV positive mothers, fathers and children who are alive today because Democrats and Republicans put justice and mercy above partisanship."

"Your kingdom is not divided into red states and blue states... Knit us, O God, into one country," she prayed, closing with the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (or at least the famous prayer attributed to him).

Earlier, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit gave the opening prayer to the convention. Of course, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York is scheduled to give the closing benediction on Thursday, and Sister Simone Campbell of NETWORK is scheduled to speak in prime time tonight.

See the full video of last night's closing prayer [here](#).

NOTE: An earlier version of this story identified Nardella as an evangelical. While she may be, I cannot find confirmation of that label, so have removed it and identified her as Episcopalian. --HS

NOTE #2: Apparently she has been identified as "evangelical," according to a CNN story.

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