



Jeffrey D. Allred/The Deseret News via AP

A riderless horse is used to honor LaVoy Finicum as his hearse drives by during the funeral in Kanab, Utah, Friday.

Finicum hailed as a hero at funeral

By FELICIA FONSECA and TERENCE PETTY
Associated Press

"My dad was murdered defending the liberties so that we may be free of bondage."

— Brittney Beck, daughter of LaVoy Finicum,

KANAB, Utah — Inside a packed Mormon church in this desert town Friday, a leader of the Oregon armed standoff who died in a confrontation with authorities was called a man of conviction and not a threat to the law enforcement officers who shot him.

"My dad was murdered defending the liberties so that we may be free of bondage," said Brittney Beck, a daughter of Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, who died Jan. 26 during a confrontation with FBI agents and Oregon state troopers.

Finicum's death on a remote Oregon road has become a symbol for those decrying federal oversight, on public lands in the West and elsewhere, and has led to protests of what they call an unnecessary use of force. But authorities say the 54-year-old was reaching for a gun during the confrontation.

At the funeral, Finicum's family drew on their faith and quoted scripture in describing their father as a man of conviction and courage.

One daughter, Thara Thenney, said her father was "defiled, mocked and eventually slain."

"He had never, not once, abandoned his trust in the Lord," she said.

The funeral was held inside a Mormon church, but national leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints last month denounced the armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and said they were "deeply troubled" by reports the occupiers were using scriptural principles to justify it.

Ammon Bundy — a Mormon and the main leader of the refuge occupation — has said he was following divine orders when he and his followers seized the refuge Jan. 2. Bundy demanded the government change federal land policies and free two ranchers imprisoned for setting fires.

Bundy is among 12 people in custody for their involvement in the ongoing occupation outside Burns. Bundy and four others were arrested during the Jan. 26 confrontation that left Finicum dead.

Federal prosecutors say

Bundy's group brandished firearms to keep officials from carrying out their duties, threatened violence and intimidated locals.

Four occupiers remain holed up at the refuge, refusing to leave without assurances they won't be arrested — an unlikely prospect since they are among 16 people named in a federal grand jury indictment.

Hundreds of people from across the country packed the church for Finicum's funeral. Trucks with American flags filled the parking lot. One had a flier with a picture of Finicum and the words "Murdered by the FBI."

"He's a hero to me, honest. His heart is for everybody," said former occupier Ben Matthews of Port Huron, Michigan, who came to Kanab to pay his respects.

The day's events in this town just north of the Arizona border were billed as "LaVoy Finicum's Stand for Freedom."

Family and friends wore red, white and blue ribbons featuring Finicum's picture and pieces of blue tarp pinned to their shirts. Finicum had been called "the tarp man" after spending a night under a tarp at the wildlife refuge when he feared an imminent raid by officials.

Sheriff's officials and the Utah Highway Patrol were on hand to ensure the events were peaceful. Given the anti-government sentiment that was expected among the crowd, local law enforcement agencies pleaded with the FBI and other federal agents to stay away.

Of the 16 Bundy followers charged with felony conspiracy, only three have been allowed to leave jail ahead of trial. They include Shawna Cox, who was in Finicum's truck when he was shot.

Just hours before the funeral, a federal judge in Portland allowed Cox to attend the ceremony in her hometown but ordered her not to discuss the standoff.

Obama says faith is 'great cure' for fear

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE AND KATHLEEN HENNESSEY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Delivering his last annual sermon to Washington's elite, President Barack Obama on Thursday warned of the corrosive impact of fear in public life and urged a bipartisan group of powerbrokers to abide by their faith "even when no one is watching."

"Fear does funny things. Fear can lead us to lash out against those who are different. Or lead us to try to get some sinister other under control," Obama said at the annual National Prayer Breakfast. "Faith is the great cure for fear. Jesus is a good cure for fear."

Obama spoke a day after making his first visit as president to an American mosque — a trip he said he made to tell Muslims "they, too, are Americans and are welcome here."

His remarks come amid of a campaign-season debate over curbing immigration, preventing terrorism and whether the U.S. will continue to open its doors to people of all faiths. Some Republican candidates and lawmakers want to stem the flow of refugees from Syria or block all Muslims from entering the U.S. in an effort to deter Islamic extremists. Obama says such proposals would violate American values.

In keeping with the tradition at the annual gathering, the president did not directly mention the political scene.

Obama also preached



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

President Barack Obama speaks at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Thursday. The annual event brings together U.S. and international leaders from different parties and religions for an hour devoted to faith.

about his personal fears, saying that "the main one I'm feeling right now is that our children grow up too fast." He said his faith has helped him overcome the "unique elements" of his job. The president urged those in the audience to practice their faith out of limelight and "to seek the best in each other and not assume the worst — and not just at the National Prayer Breakfast."

An event that stretches back to the Eisenhower era, the prayer breakfast is often seen as a chance for politicians to press pause on the debate of the day and gather in fellowship and reflection.

It has not always lived up to that billing.

In 2013, keynote

speaker Ben Carson, then a neurosurgeon and now a Republican candidate for president, drew attention for complaining about tax laws and offering suggestions for health care changes.

Carson, who has stepped away from campaigning coming in fourth in Monday's Iowa caucuses, was in the audience Thursday.

House Speaker Paul Ryan also veered into political territory with welcoming remarks that referenced the debate over gun control. The speaker noted what he described as "growing impatience"

with prayer. He seemed to reference criticism of politicians who offer "thoughts and prayers" to victims of mass shootings but oppose tightening gun laws.

The hashtag #thoughtsandprayers was adopted after the San Bernardino shootings by those frustrated with prayerful sentiments offered by gun-rights supporters in Congress. Obama, too, has said "our thoughts and prayers are not enough."

"The attitude in some quarters these days is, 'Don't just pray; do something about it,'" Ryan said. "The thing is, when you are praying, you are doing something about it. You are revealing the presence of God."

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SUBMIT FAITH NEWS
The faith page features local, national and international faith-related news. Send information about local faith-related news and events, including concerts, special speakers and activities to community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

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