

TO THE CLASSES OF 1941
HALDANE HIGH SCHOOL
COLD SPRING, NEW YORK.

I regret that it is impossible for me to be present to address you in person and to tell you what is in my heart on this important occasion. Mr. Hageny suggested I write you a letter for Mr. Southard to read, and this I thankfully do.

To many of you who listen to Mr. Southard reading this letter, the Morris and Dora DeLee medal may be just another prize to work for and win, or to accept in your stride, but I wish these awards to be much more than this.

I wish them to expound our beloved country to you and to cement a bond of friendship between it and you which will live as long as you do, and which you will transmit to your descendants.

I am speaking now to the students at Haldane and I say - you do not, you cannot, realize as we old folks do, the blessings those who live under the stars and stripes, enjoy. You cannot realize them even now, when they are being imperilled by the world cataclysm in which we live. Most Americans have taken them for granted, have not considered with what blood and toil and anguish they had been secured. And now when they are in danger of being taken away, we all are suffering a rude awakening.

What is this thing called Americanism? what is the American way of Life?

My ideas of Americanism are presented to you in the Morris and Dora DeLee medal, in symbolic form, and accompanying each

medal is a little booklet which explains the symbols. Let me quote parts from the little book.

This medal is intended to show, in symbols, the foundation of our American Way of Life.

The Front of the medal. In the center is our main theme, EX LUCE JUSTITIA ET CARITAS - from Light come Justice and Charity. Light is synonymous with truth.

You have learned from your books on the history of man from what depths of savagery, and by what difficult and toiling marches we have risen to a precarious level of civilization, - at least we fondly call it that. What has rid us of our innate barbarism?

The old Bible and the coming of Christ. Our moral natures have been developed and ennobled mostly through these Judeo-Christian contributions to the world. In America more than anywhere they have grown to fuller flower, and this medal symbolizes the fact. Hence the name The Americanism Medal.

In the right upper corner are the Tablets of Stone Moses brought down from Sinai bearing the Ten Commandments. They appear on heavenly clouds. Think how happy the world would be if these ten simple moral laws were honored by all men! They are the greatest single contribution ever made to humanity.

Under the Tablets of the Law appears the Menorah, the holy, seven branched candelabrum. It was placed in the Tabernacle in Moses' time and symbolizes the six days of the Creation and the seventh day, the Sabbath; also the seven continents of the earth and the seven heavens, all lighted by the Law of God.

To signify the equal contribution of Jesus, in the upper right and alongside, is the Star of Bethlehem set in the Cross shining on the Christ child. This tells us that with His coming more light was brought to humanity to aid their toilsome march to civilization.

On the reverse of the medal is our revered and beloved Flag, which stands for Americanism. And what is Americanism? It is a Way of Life component of

1. Freedom of the mind, which is liberty of opinion.
2. Freedom of the spirit, which is liberty of religion.
3. Freedom of the body, which is liberty of person.
4. Freedom of speech and assembly, which is liberty of redress.
5. Freedom to pursue happiness, which is liberty of effort.
6. Freedom to practice righteousness and to do charity, which is liberty of soul.

Our President speaks of four freedoms. They are incorporated in the six I have mentioned. He hopes they may be spread all over the world, and so do I.

Below the Flag, on the medal, is the book of learning and on it the torch of progress. These symbols mean learn your world and carry the lighted torch of progress ever forward for more light.

The laurel expresses the reward given you by your fellow men, but the greater reward is in your inner consciousness of having done right.

May I tell you a few things about Morris and Dora DeLee whose names appear on the medal?

My father and mother came to America to escape oppression in the old world. This was about in 1850. They settled in Cold Spring, New York, being the first Jews there and my father peddled, with a pack on his back, general merchandise up and down the Hudson River. They grew up with the village. They partook of its joys and its sorrows. No one ever thought they were different from their neighbors except that they worshipped God in a different way, and said their prayers in a language that was neither English nor Latin, but the same that Christ spoke. When the children grew up they said their prayers in English, and no one thought there was anything wrong with that either.

Eleven children were born and the family spread to other parts of our America. Under the spirit of Americanism my parents and these children have contributed their share to the improvement and protection of the land which sheltered them and gave them the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In gratitude for these benefits the Morris and Dora DeLee Medal of Honor was founded by my brother, Solomon T. DeLee, in 1909. It is my privilege to carry it on in the same spirit.

I am hoping that this medal will be a sort of shrine in your home, a constant inspiration to you for seeking the light of truth, of obedience to the universal God given laws, of the spirit of Jesus Christ, of charity and justice to all, which is true Americanism.