

HHH: A SALUTE TO THE FOURTH OF JULY JULY 4, 1970

Well we just went through Flag Day, and I know some people think "Well, that's old fashioned. Anybody that salutes the flag - he's sort of one of these fellows that doesn't appreciate the finer things of life." I want to just level with you. I've had enough education (to) take care of two families, as far as formal education is concerned. I've been a full professor, a part-time professor, an assistant professor, and starved as an instructor. I know a little bit about education.

I don't claim that I've been the greatest professor, but I've been in the experience. And I want to say that the more that I read, the more that I've learned to love this nation, not because it's perfect, but because it represents hope. And I've been going around watching youngsters take the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. And I've wondered if all of us really knew what this is about.

You see, I don't like flag-burners. I want you to know that. I don't like them at all. I do think that flag, however, permits me to stand up and argue; I do think it permits me to have free speech; I do think it permits me to say what I want to say as long as I'm willing to protect the right of another fellow to say what he wants to say. I think it gives me every right to dissent. But it doesn't give me the right to destroy, or to defame -- not a bit.

Well, when I take that Pledge of Allegiance, I know that it's like when I took the Oath of Office for Senator -- to protect the Constitution of the United States, to protect it against all enemies, foreign and domestic, etc., etc., -- that's a pledge. And you ended up saying "So help me, God." That's a blood oath. That's a sacred covenant. And when I took it, I don't mind telling you that tears came down my face, because it was a great -- ooh, what a great honor, what a great privilege.

Well, when you take the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States, you say the following: "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and to the Republic for which it stands." Now do you know what that all means? Of course you do. It means just one thing. It means representative government, constitutional government; it means change -- peacefully; evolution, not revolution. It means construction, not destruction. It means persuasion, not abuse. "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and..... the republic for which it stands."

And then comes the commitment -- this is the one that really counts. One nation - just one great country - these United States of America - not two - separate and unequal - but one. And under God. Not under the Democrats or the Republicans. And why was that put there? Because the moral and spiritual basis of democracy is in human dignity. And how do you think we got to be called dignified - not by the way we act, but

because we believe we were created in the image of our Maker and were more than beasts in the field. And then after that we say "indivisible," -- not north, not south, not black, not white, not rich, not poor, but indivisible.

And then "with liberty", - a beautiful word. Not license - liberty - that requires responsibilities. And justice. Justice - do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Justice. Not to make it that those who already had too much have more, but those who have too little have enough. Justice. "For the least of these" - justice for the poor, the black, justice, if you please for the child, the disabled, the sick. And for whom? For all. That's what it's about. For all.

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