

A few days ago, in keeping with a practice which has been followed by the President and the Congress of the United States, I issued a proclamation designating "Loyalty Day" in Maryland, and asked the people of this State to join with me in affirming support of our form of government and its cardinal principles. In this proclamation, I asked the people of Maryland to demonstrate this affirmation of loyalty through the display of flags, demonstrations and other ceremonies. I am grateful indeed that this Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has seen fit to comply with my request and to stage these colorful and soul-stirring exercises to reawaken the people of this community as to their obligations and responsibilities as citizens of the United States of America. Through the good offices and under the sponsorship of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, similar celebrations and similar demonstrations are being held throughout our country.

We Americans take great pride in our patriotism — in our affection and devotion to a country which has given us not only an abundant life but a life in which we can enjoy peace, freedom, justice and respect for human dignity. Our loyalty, as good citizens, is beyond reproach, we all know, but I believe nevertheless that it is important that we set aside this one day for a public demonstration of this quality of loyalty to our country. But true patriotism, we all should remember, is more than marching bands, a display of flags, an explosion of fireworks.

True patriotism is not only the belief in, but the practice of, the cardinal virtues — faith, hope and love. It is faith in the noble principles of democracy, faith in liberty, in justice, faith in essential good qualities of human beings. It is hope in the future of democracy in our nation which was founded on its principles. It is charity toward all and malice toward none. True patriotism is loving one's country, respecting its traditions and honoring its people, high or low, rich or poor. True patriotism means standing firm and unselfish for the right, for the common good, for the peace and well-being of all, sacrificing self, if need be, and unafraid of any and all opposition.

So, on this Loyalty Day of 1963, let us give humble thanks to Almighty God for this nation and for the principles of freedom and liberty for which it stands. And with this thanksgiving, let us renew our pledge that we, as proud American patriots, stand ready to make any sacrifice we may be called upon to make to safeguard our government, our freedom and our American way of life.