

Pro pace et fraternitate gentium

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"For the Peace and Brotherhood of Men"

In Dr. Wangari's class of Nobel Laureates, her peers include Former President Jimmy Carter, the late President of the Palestinian National Authority Yasser Arafat, and Nelson Mandela to name a few of the other 104 recipients. The medal was designed by Gustav Vigeland, a Polish man, to illustrate the peace each honored individual has fostered in the brotherhood of men. The Latin phrase inscribed on the backside of the medal, "For the Peace and Brotherhood of Men" is accompanied by a triangle of three men. All three of them are holding hands. On the front side, the face of Alfred Nobel is encircled by the name of the recipient and the year it was awarded. Constructed entirely of gold, the medal has been given to only a handful of mankind.

But, the Nobel Peace Prize doesn't only come with a triangular "brotherhood" or a picture of the foundation's face. A parade to honor the year's winner along with prize money is involved. Dr. Maathai, the sole winner of 2004, was given 10,000,000 Swedish kronor (SEK), a somewhat inflated number from 1901 when the first honorees were given 150, 782 kronor (SEK). Henry Dunant and Frédéric Passy, the two men from 1901, were honored with the first Nobel Peace Prize for their construction of the Red Cross and Geneva Convention. It was felt an authoritative response was needed to help control the actions of men during times of war. Dunant and Passy believed that no man can totally control himself during the entirety of war, so they partnered the ideals of one with the coalition of the other and in result; the Red Cross enforces the rules laid down by the Geneva Convention.

As in the first year of the honor, there are many years when multiple people win the same prize. That means medals are given to each individual, but the money is divided up evenly. Although it may seem backwards, creating many medals rather than awarding more money, the concentration of the award is where the glory is. For Dr. Maathai it was the Green Belt Movement, an organization in response to the hardships felt by women due to the deforestation near villages. Women, in charge of collecting the day's firewood, would spend the entire day walking to and from. Over time the distance increased to a point where women were spending an entire day walking rather than living in the village. Dr. Maathai began a movement to replant trees along stretches of land coined 'belts.' The result was an ecological answer to economic and social problems for women in a country where things of that nature were not and still are not common.

Not only do most recipients share a common birth date prior to 1940, they also administered a fraternity for peace that has made an impact on the World. Their actions, all from 1901 to 2004, have left craters in the sides of hate, ignorance, even deforestation, and we thank them each year with a medal, kronor, and a place in history.