



January 14, 2022

Dear Friends,

On Mulberry Street, in downtown Scranton, there is a beautiful mural you may have noticed that includes an image of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his famous quote:

"I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

These words are an important reminder of the difficult work and reflective processes involved with the ongoing search for racial justice and as we consider especially the scourge of anti-Black and other forms of racism. As The University of Scranton joins with the nation to celebrate and reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. King, we must continue to challenge ourselves – personally, as a community and an institution of higher education, and as a country – to seek out our own blindness and shortfalls and remain steadfast in the work of community-building and solidarity.

I am heartened by the ongoing dialogue, planning, learning, research, teaching and service that is happening on this campus in relation to forwarding the goals of diversity, equity and inclusion. During his life, Dr. King spoke at three of our sister Jesuit colleges and universities and remembering his words can give us a blueprint for continued action.

At Saint Louis University, he stressed the importance of structural change leading to broader social changes:

"While the law can't change the hearts of men, it does change the habits. And, in time, habits change attitudes."

At Saint Peter's College, Dr. King talked about the evils of inequality and the incompatibility of segregation and democracy – reminding us that his work faced staunch opposition – while maintaining an abiding hope of what is possible:

"Although some will be scarred, lose jobs and be called bad names, our problems will be solved. We shall overcome."

At Saint Joseph's University, he spoke about the "Future of Integration," including the importance of enforcing pending civil rights legislation and recognizing that "our destinies are tied together":

"We will win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of Almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands."

Less than six months later, Dr. King was assassinated. As we know, his legacy continues and there is still so much work to do in fulfilling the hopes and dreams for which he labored and prayed. A Catholic and Jesuit university holds a special responsibility toward this end. So let our reflections today inspire us to follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther King, Jr., to lead the way of change rooted in love as we build the Kingdom of God together.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Marina, S.J.
President