



January 15, 2024

Dear Friends,

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. frequently credited Jesus Christ for his inspiration and Mohandas Gandhi for his approach to initiating change. As The University of Scranton community celebrates Martin Luther King Day, we join with others across the nation in turning to Dr. King and the example he set to find inspiration and effect change where needed.

In Dr. King's first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, he described six fundamental principles of his philosophy of nonviolence.

- Principle One: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people;
- Principle Two: Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding;
- Principle Three: Nonviolence works to defeat injustice, not people;
- Principle Four: Nonviolence holds that suffering for a cause can educate and transform people and societies;
- Principle Five: Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate;
- Principle Six: Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.

Of course, Dr. King did not merely speak of these principles. He practiced them and made great sacrifices to advance them. When the news of his assassination reached Thomas Merton, the great Trappist monk and author and a devoted friend of King's, Merton sent a note of condolence to Coretta Scott King saying, "[Dr. King] has done the greatest thing anyone can do. In imitation of his master, he has laid down his life for friends and enemies...He will go down in history as one of our greatest citizens."

As we witness violence and war continuing in the world, and see injustice, hate and divisiveness in our own country, let us keep in mind the fundamental principles above and seek to live them out as active participants in the ongoing work of democracy and social justice.

Although we have much more to do as we strive to build the Kingdom of God for all at Scranton and beyond, let us be guided by Dr. King's inspiration. May we always choose love over hate and truly believe and trust that justice will prevail.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph G. Marina, S.J.

President