

Statement for Observance of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2022

From the US Conference of Catholic Bishops,
Most Reverend José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles,
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

We recall once again this year, the witness and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us remember not only the justice that he pursued, but how he pursued it.

Rev. King was driven by the biblical vision of righteousness and truth, a vision that he understood to be reflected in our nation's founding documents. He believed in what he called the "American creed," the belief expressed by our founders that all men and women are created equal and endowed by God with a sacred dignity and undeniable rights to life, liberty, and equality.

More than a half-century after his death, America faces many challenges — this ongoing pandemic, issues of economic inequality and racial discrimination, violence in our communities, the struggle to welcome immigrants and refugees. In recent years, our nation has also become more polarized and our divisions angrier.

As we look to our future, let us continue to draw from Rev. King's wisdom, especially his commitment to the Beatitudes of Jesus, and the principles of nonviolence and love for our enemies.

In his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Rev. King reminds us that we are brothers and sisters, part of a beautiful web of relationships of mutual care, each of us depending on others as others depend on us. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," he wrote. "We are ... tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Let us go forward in that same spirit of fraternity and solidarity, and let us carry on his work for equality and justice. As we remember Rev. King, let us continue to learn from him and imitate his example and prophetic witness.