

THE VISION...
A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE AND PEACE

As we commemorate the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we must claim the same vision that led Dr. King to his death. The vision that he embodied was God's vision – a world of justice, peace and unity.

Dr. King was not afraid to confront the evils of his time. He refused to tolerate the poverty that deprived people of food, decent housing, employment, health care, and education. He confronted institutional racism that claimed some people superior and others inferior. He warned against the dangers of capitalistic greed that exploited poor nations and favored the wealthy. He recognized the evil of war and preached and practiced the way of peace and nonviolence.

What would Dr. King say today to our national and world leaders who are engaged in the "war on terrorism"? He would ask them to consider the vision of the "beloved community" that embraces people of all races, nations, cultures, and religious beliefs. He would challenge them to build an international coalition that would use nonviolent means to end terrorism in the world. He would ask all nations to re-examine their policies towards the poor, oppressed, and needy in the world. He would exhort them to spend more time and resources on eliminating world hunger, poverty, illiteracy, AIDS, and all forms of human bondage.

All people are being called to embrace a vision of peace and love. We are being called to lead the way to peace by our example, and to show others how to love our enemies and not give in to hate. We ask God to give us the power to exorcise the demons of evil, hatred, bigotry, and racism in our hearts, homes, and communities. We ask God for grace and patience – for the vision still has time.

SHARING THE VISION...
PERSONAL REFLECTION

How do the following readings help you to see God's plan for us in the world? Share your thoughts with others, or write them down for future reflection.

Reading 1: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

How long, O Lord? I cry for help
but you do not listen!
I cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not intervene.
Why do you let me see ruin;
why must I look at misery?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and clamorous discord.

Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets,
so that one can read it readily.
For the vision still has its time,
presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it,
it will surely come, it will not be late.
The rash one has no integrity;
but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

Reading 2: Excerpt from "The American Dream"

"... in seeking to make the dream a reality we must use and adopt a proper method. I'm more convinced than ever before that nonviolence is the way. I'm more convinced than ever before that violence is impractical as well as immoral... We need not hate; we need not use violence. We can stand up before our most violent opponent and say: We will match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will and we will still love you." (*delivered by Dr. King July 4, 1965*)

SHARING THE VISION...
PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

- **Is my life deeply rooted in a life of prayer and worship? Do I pray for clarity and dis-**

cernment of God's vision in my life? Do I share God's vision of love and peace with others?

- **What have I done to bring about justice in my community? Have I been actively involved with others in eliminating bigotry, prejudice, and racism in my community? Have I been an instrument of racial healing and reconciliation?**
- **What have I done to improve the quality of life in my community? Have I advocated for better housing, job training for the unskilled, jobs for the unemployed? Have I done my best to keep drugs and narcotics away from the children and youth in my community? Have I done my best to keep guns out of my community?**
- **Have I been a good role model and example of patience, understanding, and cooperation? Have I practiced nonviolence and restraint in the face of conflict?**

SHARING THE VISION...
PRAYER FOR HEALING AND
RECONCILIATION

This prayer may be used for community prayer, family prayer, or individual prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

All: God of All, we surrender all of our cares and concerns to you. You walk with us on this journey of life and guide our footsteps to the way of peace and love. You made us to be brother and sister to each other, and to be members of one family. You called us to be your instruments of healing, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, and peace. You give us your wisdom to bring an end to all division and conflict. You give us the grace and the strength to build a civilization of love and understanding. You creates us in your divine

image of love so that we may recognize your presence in the poor, the weak, the sick, the imprisoned, in strangers and immigrants, refugees, and people living with AIDS. We come before you and ask you to reassure us that we are your adopted sons and daughters, held firm by the cords of compassion and love, and that nothing can ever tear us apart. give us what we need to bring to completion your vision and work of universal healing and reconciliation among all people. Amen.

PRAYER OF SORROW

One: When I am anxious, angry, and upset about many things, I lose control and hurt others.

All: Lord, fill me with your peace and love.

One: When I am selfish, arrogant, and self-absorbed, I become indifferent to others and ignore their needs and concerns.

All: Lord, fill me with your peace and love.

One: When I see people from different races, ethnic groups, and cultures, I judge them and become afraid.

All: Lord, fill me with your peace and love.

PRAYER OF HEALING

All: God of love and compassion, come to us with your gift of mercy and healing. Breathe new life into us and renew our minds with your vision of peace and understanding. Nourish us with hope and make us a sure sign and witness to your healing power of grace. Give us the strength to be balm for the poor and powerless, for the sick and alienated. Help us to be neighbor to the oppressed. Make our words and actions proclaim to the world that you care for us, and save us from all harm and evil. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

One: For the welfare of the whole world and the unity of our human family.

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

One: For religious and political leaders, that they will be heralds and instruments of peace and nonviolence.

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

One: For all who suffer oppression, slavery, abuse, and rejection.

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

One: For those who suffer from famine, poverty, and misery.

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

One: For those unjustly deprived of liberty, prisoners, refugees, and exiles.

All: Lord, have mercy on your people.

OUR FATHER

CONCLUDING PRAYER

All: Dear God, help us to remember that each of us is created in your image of love and goodness. We see your image in the refugees from Afghanistan and other countries torn apart by internal conflicts, war, and violence. We see your image in the faces of millions of children dying of HIV/AIDS in Africa. We see your image in the faces of those who commit evil and inflict terror in the world. Give us the courage to defend the poor and weak, to confront the proud and the arrogant, to speak out against war, racism, violence, and injustice in all forms. Help us to be patient, compassionate, and loving witnesses of your vision of peace and unity embodied in the life of our brother, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Amen.

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Martin Luther King Day

The Vision



Still Has Time

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