

Martin Luther King, Jr (1929-1968)

Observed 4 April



Martin Luther King, Jr. is for many people throughout the world a shining example of Christian faith lived out for the benefit of all. Dr. King's faith was the bedrock on which he built a life of extraordinary service and leadership. He was a brilliant student who began college at 15, receiving degrees from Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary. After receiving his first call to a Baptist pulpit, he began his studies at Boston University, where he earned a PhD in theology. Dr. King was always a daring and profound thinker, who never shied away from the implications of his understanding of God's call upon him. He was greatly influenced by the great Hindu leader Mohandas K. Gandhi, whose living out of what Jesus taught inspired Dr. King to do likewise. Furious and brokenhearted at the extraordinary injustices he saw in the world, particularly in his own country, he used his glorious voice and powerful words to rouse countless people to action, changing our society forever, seeking justice for all people, particularly the downtrodden and excluded, people of color and the poor. His assassination in 1968 was a tragedy that rocked the world, but he is honored for all that he accomplished by an annual holiday on which all are encouraged to devote a day to the service of others.

Some favorite inspiring quotes from Dr. King:

- "... there are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they are worth dying for. I will submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for he isn't fit to live."
- "We have come to see the power of nonviolence. We have come to see that this method is not a weak method. It is the strong man who can stand up amid opposition who can stand up amid violence being inflicted upon him and not retaliate with violence."
- "With this faith we shall be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."
- "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny and whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. "
- "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Lessons Genesis 37:17b-20; Psalm 77:11-20; Ephesians 6:10-20; Luke 6:27-36

Collect Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet Martin Luther King, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.