



January 17, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Monday, January 20, 2025, we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and recall his profound commitment to justice, equality, non-violence and the unyielding pursuit of peace. That same day, President Donald J. Trump will be inaugurated as the 47<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

In this moment of leadership transition, our communities face challenges and opportunities. Division and dissent often overshadow the respectful dialogue we so desperately need. Yet, unity is not merely an ideal; it is a necessity for the common good of our society. Dr. King once said, "We must learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools." He envisioned that it is indeed possible for all people to live and prosper together as a community of love and peace.

Admittedly, the challenges we face today are, at times, very discouraging. We are witnessing polarization that often leads to conflict instead of conversation. Many feel unheard, marginalized, and filled with uncertainty about the future. Even so, it is in these moments of adversity that we have the greatest opportunity to embody the spirit of love and understanding that Dr. King championed.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, also said, "In today's world, which increasingly faces the challenges of social injustice, division and conflict that hinder the realization of the common good, Dr. King's dream of harmony and equality for all people, attained through nonviolent and peaceful means, remains ever timely."<sup>1</sup>

As Catholics, we have an even greater commandment from Christ, who said "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15: 12-13)

Reflecting on Dr. King's words and historic witness, and the transition in leadership in Washington D.C., I invite all the people of our Diocese to recommit to being agents of peace and unity. Please join me in praying for President Trump and his administration, and pray also that God will bless us as we strive to embody the love, peace, hope, and unity for which Dr. King so passionately advocated.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior  
Bishop of Harrisburg

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<sup>1</sup>Hannah Brockhaus, "Pope Francis Praises Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Timely' Message of Peace," *National Catholic Register*, <https://www.ncregister.com/cna/pope-francisc-praises-martin-luther-king-jr-s-timely-message-of-peace> (accessed January 2, 2025).