

Let us pray,

Lord, guide us to be steadfast in our pursuit of justice for all people. May we learn from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's message and life of non-violent resistance to injustice.

Amen.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea."

That was written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as he was sitting in a solitary confinement cell in Birmingham, Alabama.

The city put up an ordinance banning public gatherings, but Rev. Dr. King decided to march with other civil rights activists to the capital.

Rev. Dr. King technically broke the law, and on Good Friday, April 12, 1963, he was arrested and put in prison.

He wasn't just arrested, however, he was put in solitary confinement, which is usually meant to torture or to contain dangerous individuals.

Rev. Dr. King was hardly a dangerous person, they just didn't like what he had to say.

One thing that saddens me is that too often the media drops Rev. Dr. King's title of Reverend.

We are silently being told that he wasn't a religious man, or conveniently trying to avoid that part of him.

But we must remember that Rev. Dr. King, wasn't just a brilliant man, or an activist, he was also a man of faith.

It was his faith that drove his protests.

It was his faith that told him to call out injustice.

It was his faith that lead him to love those who persecuted him.

It was his faith, and Mahatma Ghandi, that lead him to non-violent resistance.

Rev. Dr. King, because of his faith, never forgot that love had to be at the heart of his resistance.

He didn't want those who were against him to be tortured, or hurt, or run out of town.

Rev. Dr. King wanted transformation.

He wanted his enemy to become his friend.

He wanted justice for his people and all people, even those who persecuted him.

As he was sitting in Birmingham jail, he was pleading with white clergy colleagues to stand with him, as he fought for freedom and equality for his people.

Reminding them that:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

But unfortunately, many of them abandoned him, but he never stopped trying to bring them along.

He never stopped loving.

Rev. Dr. King's faith reminded him that true change isn't just about removing an injustice, its about removing all injustices, not just for those that we care about, but all injustices.

Rev. Dr. King's faith lead the civil rights movement, it was the foundation of who he was and how he moved.

He wasn't perfect, he made mistakes, but there is no denying that there was Christ in his heart, and he tried his very best to emulate Christ even through the cruelty and disappointments.

He reminds us that we cannot change the world, if we first are not willing to be changed ourselves.

If we are not open to the Spirit and how she moves, and willing to follow that movement?

How can we claim to be followers of God?

In our Gospel today, we see Simon being transformed into Peter by Jesus.

Simon in one brief moment, said a complete yes to God, and transformed his identity, to that which God had called him to.

His old self had died, and his new identity is now interwoven with Jesus Christ and his mission.

Later becoming the rock of the christian church.

But that never would have happened, if Simon wasn't willing to become Peter.

It is hard to not see similarities in Rev. Dr. King and Jesus.

Not in the divinity part, but in the non-violent resistance to the injustice of their time.

They didn't curse down the establishment, they invited them to enter into the change with them.

And even though they made no threats, both were murdered trying to bring God's love to all the people of God.

I pray we stop making the same mistakes that we humans keep making over and over again.

I pray we stop killing those who just want to promote a better life, freedom, and human dignity for people at the bottom of society.

It was not a coincidence that Jesus befriended prostitutes, tax collectors, adulterers, fornicators, murderers, thieves, you name it.

He did so, because true justice requires all of us.

It requires all of us to be at the table.

It requires all of us to care about all of us.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”

Reverend Dr. King, deserves our remembrance and sainthood.

Not because he was a perfect man, but because he was willing to follow the way of Jesus, even at the consequence of someone taking his life.

Following Jesus is not a path of safety, it is a path of doing what is right, even when others are doing what is wrong.

Following Jesus is fighting for those who are experiencing
injustice, no matter who they are,
And doing it in a way that brings the world together, instead of
continuing the division and cycle of hatred and violence that we
all know too well.

Are we willing to change if our lord calls us to?

Are we willing to accept the call of non-violent resistance with a
never ending emphasis on love for all people.

Justice isn't a bad word.

It's our call to treat all people the way we would treat Jesus
Christ, the lamb of God.

And there is no greater calling than that.

Amen.