

CELEBRATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY
January 20, 2003

Opening Remarks:

Dr. King's Values and the CHE Core Values:

Dr. King – The dream of a land where every man will respect the dignity and worth of human personality – this is the dream.

Reverence for Each Person – We believe that each person is a manifestation of the sacredness of human life.

Dr. King – Our world is a neighborhood...we are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

Community – We demonstrate our connectedness to each other through inclusive and compassionate relationships.

Dr. King – Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle, the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

Justice – We advocate for a society in which all can realize their full potential and achieve the common good.

Dr. King – The only truly responsible consensus will emerge when grassroots people know the issues, articulate their demands, and become a part of the democratic process.

Commitment to Those Who Are Poor – We give priority to those whom society ignores.

Dr. King – We are simply seeking to bring into full realization the American dream – a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed.

Stewardship – We care for and strengthen the ministry and all resources entrusted to us.

Dr. King – The forces that threaten to negate life must be challenged by courage...this requires the exercise of a creative will that enables us to hew out a stone of hope from a mountain of despair.

Courage – We dare to take the risks our faith demands of us.

Dr. King – Subject yourself to endless self-analysis so as to be certain that you are fulfilling the true meaning of your work, maintaining your sense of purpose, holding fast to your ideals, and guiding people in the right direction.

Integrity – We keep our word and are faithful to who we say we are.

Reflection – *Who Will Speak?* (Marty Haugen)

Who will speak for the poor and the broken? Who will speak for the peoples oppressed?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will speak if you don't?

Refrain:

Who will speak if you don't? Who will speak if you don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak for the ones who are voiceless, speak the truth in the places of power?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will speak if you don't? (Refrain)

Who will speak for the children of violence? Who will speak for the women abused?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will speak if you don't? (Refrain)

Who will speak for the shunned and the outcast? Who will speak for all people with AIDS?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will speak if you don't? (Refrain)

Who will work for the thousands of homeless? Who will work in the ghettos and streets?
Who will work so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will work if you don't? (Refrain)

Who will care for the plants and the creatures? Who will care for the land and the sea?
Who will work so their voice will be heard? Oh, who will work if you don't? (Refrain)

Discussion:

On this day, we commemorate the timeless values that Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us through his example – the values of courage, truth, justice, compassion, dignity, humility, and service that so radiantly defined Dr. King's character and empowered his leadership. We also remember his dream and world vision, a world whose people and nations had triumphed over poverty, racism, war and violence. Likewise, we celebrate his vision of ecumenical solidarity, his insistence that all people and all faiths had something meaningful to contribute to building the beloved community. Dr. King once said that, "we all have to decide whether we will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. Life's most persistent and nagging question," he said, is "what are you doing for others?" Our musical reflection echoed this in asking us how we are the voice of the voiceless, and challenging us to identify our individual and collective purposes in life.

Today, we, the staff of Catholic Health East pause to commemorate Dr. King's dream for society. At the same time, we focus on our own dreams. If he were here with us today, what accomplishments would we highlight that have contributed to building community both within our office and throughout our system? How are we living out our values in creating peace through justice, universal brother and sisterhood, and freedom, justice and equality for all people? Let's look at our values and the related values of Dr. King, and identify some examples.

Three accomplishments and related values evidenced in building community:

- a)
- b)
- c)

Three challenges for the future and related values in addressing the dream of creating peace through justice, universal brother and sisterhood, and freedom, justice and equality for all people:

a)

b)

c)

Group Feedback:

Closing Reflection – *Thanks Be to God* (Marty Haugen)

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will 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.

With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Speaker: Joe Carter)

Thanks be to God when people care, thanks be for friends and loved ones;
Thanks be to God, thanks be to God, forever and ever.

Thanks be to God for food and home, thanks be for health and laughter;
Thanks be to God, thanks be to God, forever and ever.

Thanks be to God when hatred ends, thanks be for peace and safety;
Thanks be to God, thanks be to God, forever and ever.

Teach us the way of your peace, kindle your fire within us;
Give us your vision of a world where people care for each other. (Repeat)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome someday:
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe that we shall overcome someday. (Repeat 3 times.)