



Dear Members of the DePaul Community,

I've never forgotten the first time I read James Baldwin's "On Being White...And Other Lies." (*Essence*, April 1984). His point, repeated frequently in his writings, was that the concept of white has no substance (as opposed to Irish or Polish, for example) except as a short-hand way to convey that one is not something else. Not Native-American perhaps, or Hispanic, or, more-often-than-not, African-American.

The concept is not solely identified with Baldwin, of course. Martin Luther King, Jr., bell hooks, Ta-Nehisi Coates and many others reflecting on race and social privilege have all made the same point. The word white conditions us into seeing difference without naming anything of substance that is actually different.

I was reminded of the essay while sitting in the Rev. Jesse Jackson's conference room shortly after NBC5 released the film showing the brutality Laquan McDonald suffered. We spoke of the senselessness of the shooting and realized we both were angered even more by the bystanders who simply let Laquan lie in the street bleeding, not bothering to check his medical condition. I cannot speculate on what those individual officers saw as they watched from a distance, but clearly nothing rose within them to identify with a fellow human being in need.

We celebrate Martin Luther King Day this year in the context of a city deeply engaged in the questions of racism. It would be a mistake if we did not also look within. DePaul is an institution of noble ideals and a proud history of inclusion. We are a human community as well, and there are always ways we can better align our ideals and our practice.

I already have invited the President's Diversity Council and the leadership of the Black Student Union to enter into conversation with me about how we might be sensitized to the ways DePaul communicates difference rather than common humanity, and methods we might use to create a stronger human community.

I invite you to do the same.

2016 is the first year DePaul University will close for the day in honor of the Reverend King. I ask you to take some time on Jan. 18 to reflect on the questions of race and identity that are important to everyone at DePaul. Please share any concerns and ideas that come to mind with members of the Presidents' Diversity Council and/or your department or college, the BSU; Student Government; Center for Identity, Inclusion and Social Change; Multicultural Student Success; President's Diversity Council; Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity; or my office at [DePaulPresidentsOffice@depaul.edu](mailto:DePaulPresidentsOffice@depaul.edu).

I look forward to sharing the results of this consultation with you in time. For now, however, I invite you to one of the many events that will be scheduled in honor of MLK Day, and I thank you for your good hearts. DePaul is a special place because of each one of you.

God bless you,

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.  
President

### **2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day**

**Saturday, January 16**

9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Marillac Social Center's Peace Fair, 212 S. Francisco Ave.

*Volunteers will help with Marillac Social Center's Peace Fair to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.*

(RSVP to Caitlin Duane: [Caitlin.duane@gmail.com](mailto:Caitlin.duane@gmail.com))

### **19th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast**

**Tuesday, January 19**

10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Lincoln Park, Student Center, Room 120

(RSVP at <http://tinyurl.com/DePaul-MLK2016>)

### **DePaul College of Law 18th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration**

**Thursday, January 21**

11:50 a.m.-12:50 p.m. DePaul Center, Room 8005

**Part One: Transforming the Campus: Students Rise Up**

*A conversation with graduate and law student activists*

(RSVP to [lawevents@depaul.edu](mailto:lawevents@depaul.edu))

### **University Ministry 4th Annual MLK Celebration. Through the eyes of Rev. King**

**Friday, January 29**

6-8 p.m. Lincoln Park, Student Center, Room 120 A/B

*A spirit-filled, musical event highlighting the joy and benefit of African-American word, teaching and preaching*

(For more information contact University Ministry)

### **DePaul College of Law 18th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration**

**Wednesday, February 3**

4-5:30 p.m. DePaul Center, Room 8005

**Part Two: From Bus Boycotts to Hashtags: Transforming Civil Rights Activism**

*A conversation with an intergenerational panel of Chicago activists.*

(RSVP to [lawevents@depaul.edu](mailto:lawevents@depaul.edu))

**Also Keep in Mind:**

**DePaul Black Leadership Coalition Sponsored Conversation. Exploring the differences in Black Males and Black Females**

**Friday, February 26**

5:30-7 p.m. Lincoln Park, Student Center, Room 220

(for more information contact Keith Baltimore, Protestant Chaplain, University Ministry)

**Annual Forum on Race: From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter and Beyond**

**Saturday, March 12**

1-3 p.m. DePaul Center, Room 8005

(for more information contact SNL)