

# Crowd urged to keep King's dream alive

By Teresa A. Parsons

Most of the people who gathered at St. Bridget's Church last Sunday remember where they were on the day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. But in celebrating the first national holiday in honor of his birth, too few recall where they were as a people when he was born, said Greer Gordon, and too few are dedicated to bringing Dr. King's whole dream to reality.

"Many of us have forgotten the 'colored only' signs. Many of us have forgotten if we had, as I do, a fair-skinned parent, that they constantly had to show cause that you could be their child," Gordon said. And from a comfortable vantage point, many people find it convenient to ignore segregation still present in some sectors of the world and the sickness of racism in our own country, she added.

Evoking a chorus of response from an overflowing crowd roused by the music of nearly a dozen gospel choirs, Gordon, the assistant director of adult education for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., offered herself as one example of what gains have been made.

"The accomplishments of the civil rights movement are the reason I can stand here tonight ... a woman with two degrees in systematic theology out of two major theological institutions in the Catholic Church that previously didn't even accept black folks in their institutions," she said.

In addition to the progress that has been made in such fields as business and politics, blacks have also been able to stop reacting to their oppression with violence against others, thanks to Dr. King.

"I personally have seen over the years the black community grow out of its seeming vindictive spirit of hatred toward those who once oppressed us ... to a picture of peace and reconciliation," Gordon observed. "We are no longer burning down buildings. We are no longer trying to attack others. We have changed. We have grown."

In the process, however, much of that violence has been turned inward upon other blacks. "We have babies having babies in Washington. We have our children shooting their brains out with all sorts of junk and



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Missionary Cleann Davis of Jesus' Disciples House of Prayer, Rochester, is framed by Lynn Council and Charlene McKnight as she praises the Lord during a song by the group Bright Clouds.

weaponry. In fact, the streets of Baltimore look like a war zone on a Saturday night because our young men are killing each other out of their anger and their frustration. And I would dare to say that Rochester is not too much different — just a little quieter," she said.

"We have begun to rest on what has been accomplished. Not only the black community, but the white community and the Hispanic community have begun to rest and say 'Haven't we done well?' But we have not done well enough."

In the black community, teaching is no longer regarded as building the future of that community and parents no longer impress upon their children the importance of a quality education. "Why is it that the best and the brightest of the black community will choose to go into corporate management before choosing to go into education?" Gordon asked.

Not enough is being done in support of nonviolent efforts by South African blacks

to end apartheid. Nor, she charged, are blacks praying and teaching their children the value of prayer and reflection.

"We have forgotten where we came from," Gordon said. "Those of us who have made these accomplishments have forgotten how to lift our hand and assist our brother or our sister upward."

Although in Dr. King's tragic death, the country and the world lost one person with the power and vision to lead people in a life-giving direction, that should not mean the loss of all hope and purpose, Gordon said.

"Have we continued with that vision and that dream or is it something that we simply pull out on the 15th or the 20th of January?" she asked.

"With our knowledge in Dr. King's accomplishments and our faith in Jesus, we should be able to continue ... Let us remember more than just his address, 'I Have A Dream.' Let us remember the dream has not yet been completed," Gordon concluded.

## Cardinal says King's memory may further ecumenism

By Tracy Early

New York (NC) — The memory of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday the nation will officially celebrate for the first time Jan. 20, could provide an important stimulus to ecumenism, Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York said Jan. 7.

The ecumenical importance of Dr. King, Cardinal O'Connor said in an interview, lies in his way of keeping social activism united with its scriptural and theological foundations.

"It is relatively easy for Christians to unite in efforts to feed the poor and house the homeless, and of course that is highly desirable," the cardinal said. "But to mistake that for true ecumenical efforts to bring about theological and spiritual unity is very superficial and a mistake. Ultimately we have to confront our theological samenesses and our theological differences."

"Somehow — I'm not quite sure how — I think Martin Luther King could help," Cardinal O'Connor said. "Clearly, he kept the two aspects together. There was more



than the social gospel in him; there was a more complex theology."

Cardinal O'Connor said he had also been impressed with how Dr. King was highly regarded by black Catholics. Recalling the symposium he sponsored last September on the first anniversary of the 1984 pastoral letter issued by the nation's 10 black Catholic bishops, he said he found it "fascinating that there were so many references throughout the day to Martin Luther King."

"It is almost a rarity if ever a black Catholic priest or bishop speaks for very long without some reference to him," he said.

"He makes us Catholics confront the fact that he could achieve so much, and ask ourselves why," he said. "My suspicion is that part of the answer is he did not separate theological beliefs and social efforts."

Cardinal O'Connor predicted that official observance of Dr. King's birthday would be even more important for its long-range impact, such as the awareness young people will gain of Dr. King as a person of stature equal to George Washington or Abraham Lincoln.

"I'm afraid that up to the present time — if we're going to be honest — many whites, many Catholics, have not given really a great deal of attention to Martin Luther King in comparison with his accomplishments," Cardinal O'Connor said.

### AQUINAS INSTITUTE THEN AND NOW



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— A series of articles to appear semi-monthly commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the school.

Aquinas Institute began in 1902 when Fr. Thomas F. Hickey, the rector of the cathedral parish, founded Cathedral High School for the graduates of the parish grammar school. Originally co-educational and business-oriented, in 1904 academic courses were added and students from other parishes were enrolled.

In 1909 Fr. John F. O'Hern replaced Fr. Hickey as head of Cathedral High and rector of the Cathedral. Both eventually became bishops of the Diocese of Rochester.

The first yearbook, *The Senior Annual*, in 1912 listed 330 students and 17 teachers (11 Sisters of St. Joseph, 3 priests and 3 laypersons). The graduating class that year had 29 students in the commercial class (18 girls, 11 boys) and 25 students in the academic course (5 girls and 20 boys). The oldest surviving alumni from Cathedral are from the 1912 class: Emmett Larkin and Walter B. Mallon. Both still live in the Rochester area.

In 1913 the yearbook spoke of the needs of the school and the hopes for "a larger and better equipped building."

By 1914 the school was drawing from other city parishes so it was renamed Rochester Catholic High School and in 1915 was officially chartered by the State Board of Regents. The 1915 class graduated 88 students, half from commercial courses (23 girls and 21 boys) and half from academic (7 girls and 37 boys). In 1915 Fr. Charles E. Muckle was named head of the school separate from rector of the cathedral.

In 1917 the student body was entirely boys, and no longer co-educational. This was in response to a papal encyclical calling for separation of the sexes in education. In the previous year Nazareth Academy had relocated to its present site on Lake Avenue, so the girls enrolled there.

In the early 1920's, when Fr. John E. Napier was principal, the school became badly overcrowded and unable to accommodate all at the original site at Brown and Frank Street (Plymouth Avenue). The overflow took classes at St. George's on Hudson Avenue and St. Boniface on Gregory Street until the new school opened in September 1925.

In 1923 a diocesan-wide drive raised more than \$900,000 and a new school, named The Aquinas Institute of Rochester, was chartered. Student enrollment in the spring of 1925 rose to 600. In the fall of 1925 the school opened on Dewey Avenue, its present site. Fr. William Byrne, Ph.D. was its first principal.

Next issue — profile of the first graduating class of 1926 — 60 years after.

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