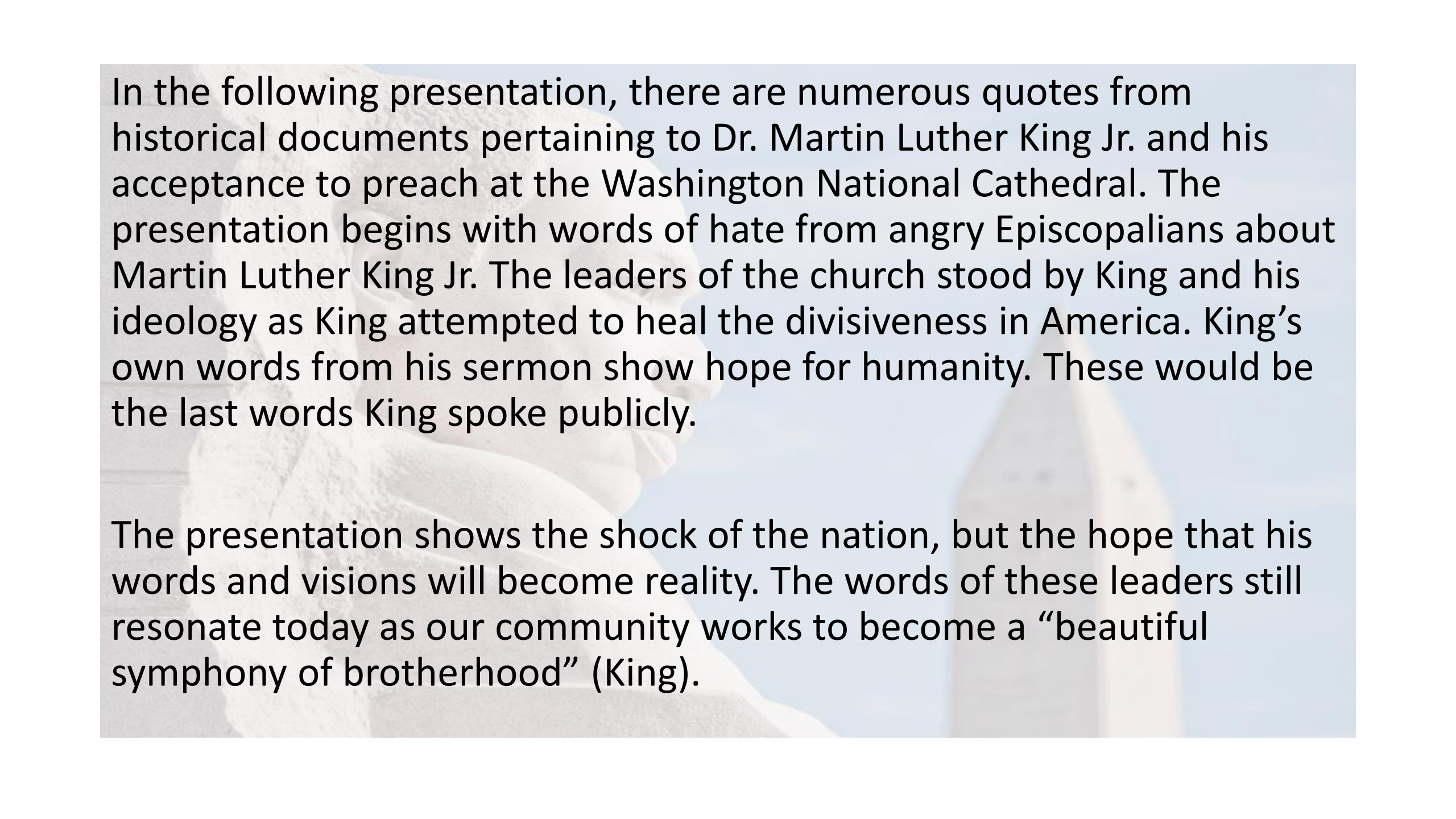


Quotes of Protest

By Aroostine Lively



In the following presentation, there are numerous quotes from historical documents pertaining to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his acceptance to preach at the Washington National Cathedral. The presentation begins with words of hate from angry Episcopalians about Martin Luther King Jr. The leaders of the church stood by King and his ideology as King attempted to heal the divisiveness in America. King's own words from his sermon show hope for humanity. These would be the last words King spoke publicly.

The presentation shows the shock of the nation, but the hope that his words and visions will become reality. The words of these leaders still resonate today as our community works to become a “beautiful symphony of brotherhood” (King).

In a letter dated March 19, 1963 and sent to Most Rev. Francis Sayre, Jr, Dean of the Washington National Cathedral, a protestor voiced their opinions on having Martin Luther King Jr attempt to have his son attend an Episcopal school in Georgia. The writer was vehemently against integration. Below are some of the quotes from the protest letter.

“Oh, my crocodile tears! If it is so sinful now not to have negroes in every church and school and restaurant and private home, why was it not considered sinful for all those years behind us?”

“The negro churches down South now are not used for preaching, but are ‘Temples of Hate’. They meet there to have propaganda thrown at the members to hate the whites, hate the whites, hate the whites.”

“I don’t see how you have the intestinal fortitude to speak out on a subject that is none of your business.”

“If he (King) is so crazy to see that he (his son) goes to school in ‘mixed’ surroundings, he could also invite the children of some of his white ‘do-gooder’ friends to bring their children to his home and try to learn with his child. That would be ‘selected mixing’.”



In a letter dated February 13, 1968 and sent to Dean Sayre, a parishioner voices their dissent at the invitation granted to Martin Luther King Jr to preach at the Washington Cathedral.

“I feel compelled to protest your offer of the Washington Cathedral for Martin Luther King’s purposes.”

“ King’s purposes are definitely racial (one group only) and that the goal is to stir up more racial tension and anxiety which can only lead to disaster. “

“We are all living under tremendous strains in our country today and we don’t need to add to these.”

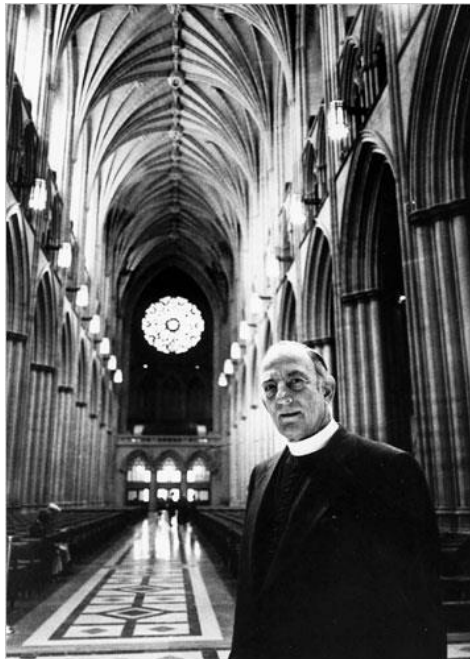
“I hope you will receive this as constructive criticism as my feelings are for all humanity.”

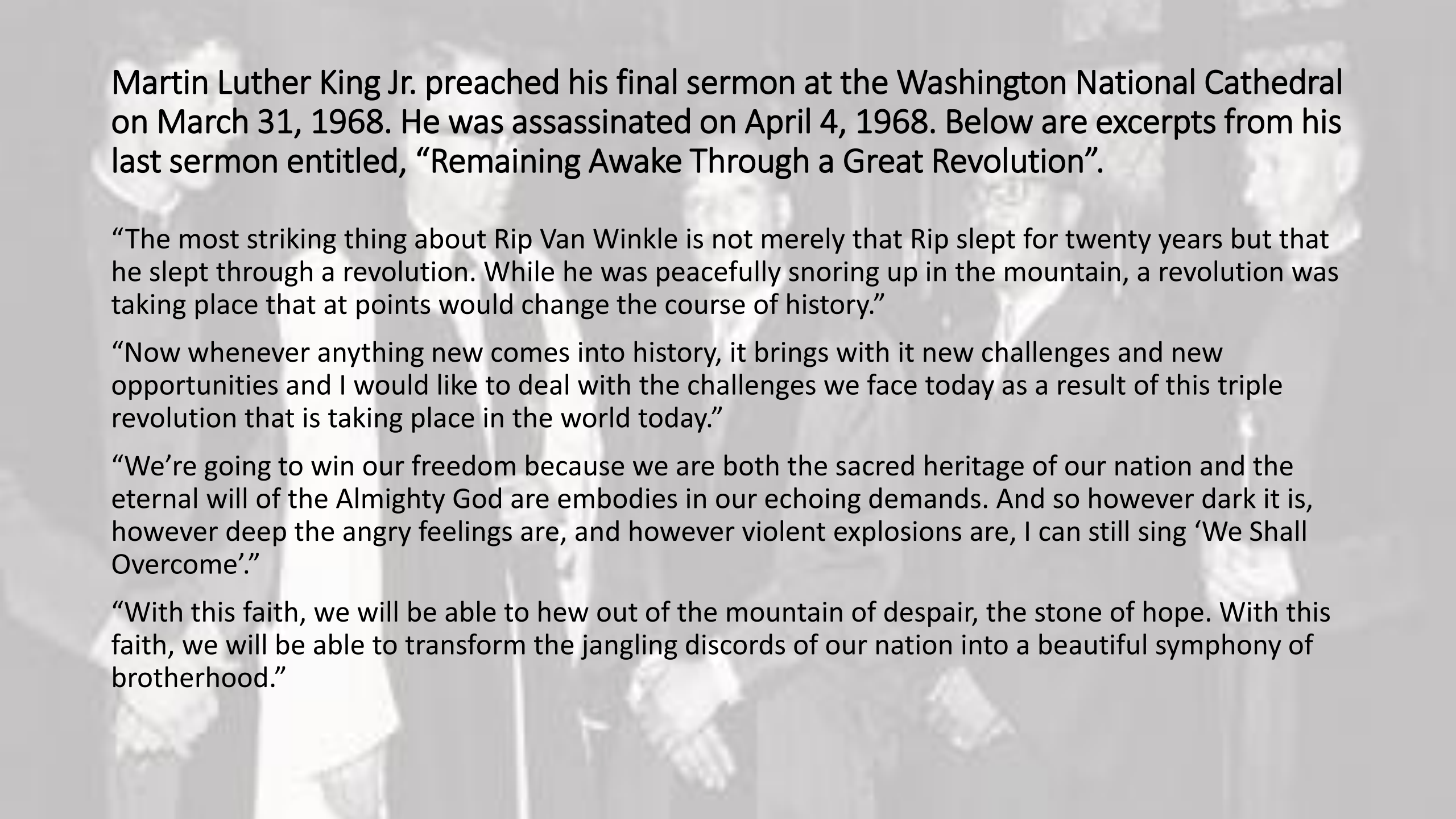


In a press release from the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Washington, Martin Luther King Jr's acceptance to preach at the Washington National Cathedral was announced. Below are excerpts from the press release.

"The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King has announced his acceptance of the invitation to preach at the 11:00 AM service in the Washington Cathedral on Sunday, March 31, 1968."

"Dr. King is coming here to hold up the poor of America, to the conscience of Christians. Dr. King, almost alone among the many leaders, still places hope in that conscience rather than in violence and in the power of the gun." Dean Sayre





Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at the Washington National Cathedral on March 31, 1968. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Below are excerpts from his last sermon entitled, “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution”.

“The most striking thing about Rip Van Winkle is not merely that Rip slept for twenty years but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring up in the mountain, a revolution was taking place that at points would change the course of history.”

“Now whenever anything new comes into history, it brings with it new challenges and new opportunities and I would like to deal with the challenges we face today as a result of this triple revolution that is taking place in the world today.”

“We’re going to win our freedom because we are both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the Almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands. And so however dark it is, however deep the angry feelings are, and however violent explosions are, I can still sing ‘We Shall Overcome’.”

“With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, the stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.”

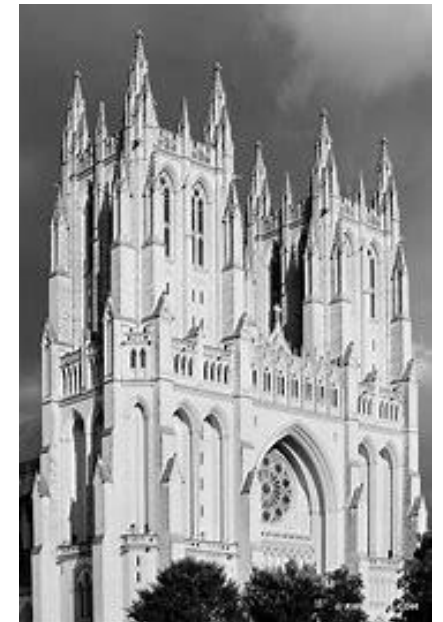
In a press release dated April 4, 1968, a joint press release was issued by the Bishop of Washington, the Rt. Rev. William F. Creighton and the Suffragan Bishop of Washington, the Rt. Rev Paul Moore. Below are excerpts from their press release.

“We write out of a deeper despair for the life of our nation than we have ever known. One of our finest, most Christian, and most courageous men our land has ever produced has been cruelly slain. He gave his life to combat the racism and blind divisiveness that resulted in his death. “

“His death has created a loss to which we know no way to adequately respond.”

“We must do all that we can to carry on his spirit and to prevent by our own self offering the sort of damaging and violent reaction that he would have wished us to resist.”

“Racism has killed Martin Luther King, but we will not allow it to defeat our nation, or to tear us apart. The cause for which he stood must now become the cause of us all.”



In a telegram sent to Mrs. Martin Luther King on April 5, 1968, Dean Sayre offered to have Martin Luther King Jr buried in Washington National Cathedral. Excerpts from that telegram are below.

“The Bishop of Washington and I would humbly extend the privilege of sepulture in Washington Cathedral to Dr. Martin Luther King. Buried in this cathedral are such great Americans as Woodrow Wilson and Cordell Hull. The Cathedral Chapter would be honored if you were to accept on behalf of your husband burial in the Cathedral.”



In a sermon dated Palm Sunday, April 7, 1968, the Very Reverend Francis Sayre preached at the Washington National Cathedral. Below are excerpts from his sermon.

“Last Friday, the day before yesterday, a service was held in this very place in memory of Martin Luther King Jr. The President of the United States sat just there where you are seated; at his side the leaders of the poor, and the mighty of this nation. The clergy of the city and the people sang those words which Martin Luther King had quoted from this very pulpit one week ago today, “In Christ there is no East or West.” The leaders of the Congress and Justice of the Supreme Court knelt to that ancient liturgy. And at the end when the formal prayers were over, the people walked softly around this great church, singing, ‘We Shall Overcome’.”

“When the service was over some of us then climbed to the tower over the Crossing of this Cathedral and looked out upon the shallow bowl set between two hills, which is the capitol of our country –Indeed, of all the world. There is lay unbelievably in flames, the stark smoke curling up, the red glow of senseless shame.”

“How deep shall be the valley of our agony before peace comes?”



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