

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

January 21, 2013 at 12:00am

A King's advice to the president on his second inauguration day

by Tony Magliano

Making a Difference

What advice would America's most renowned black man offer to America's first black president? If he were alive today, what wisdom would the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. offer to President Barack Obama?

This question takes on added significance considering that this year, Obama's second public inauguration and the federal holiday honoring King fell on the same day -- Jan. 21.

As a Christ-centered man, King would first of all urge the president to always do what Jesus would do. And likewise, to always refrain from doing what Jesus would not do. King would urge a prayerful reading of the four Gospels to help determine what the compassionate, nonviolent Jesus would do today.

With the Gospel as his guide, King said, "The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness."

Violence has its evil grip on so much of our society and world. But the Gospel calls us to build the nonviolent "beloved community."

Therefore, King would advise the president to become a prophet of peaceful nonviolence, urging parents, teachers, politicians and all to dispel the demons of fear, anger, greed, vengeance and violence by teaching trust, gentleness, forgiveness, justice, compassion, respectful dialogue and love for all.

And King would ask Obama to do everything possible to completely reverse the proliferation of weapons throughout the nation and world.

In light of the recent tragic gun-related murders of Connecticut school children, King would ask the president to courageously push Congress to pass strong, meaningful gun-control legislation, including universal gun registration, comprehensive background checks on all gun sales, a total ban on all assault weapons and large ammunition magazines, limited gun purchases, and greatly increased mental health services nationwide.

King, who wrote that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death," would attempt to convince Obama to urgently work for an end to the arms race, nuclear weapons, weapon sales, drone assassinations, the Afghanistan war, all combat operations and the 700-plus military bases worldwide.

King would passionately urge the president to work for the transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars from the annual military budget to fund social needs, especially poverty and hunger- focused programs nationally and globally.

What about abortion? If he were alive today, would King oppose the murdering of unborn babies?

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Based on his overall love for the poor and vulnerable -- without exception -- it is reasonable to conclude that King would also take up the cause of the unborn and urge the president to reverse his pro-abortion stance.

King's niece, Alveda King, said in an interview with LifeNews.com, "I know in my heart if Uncle Martin were alive today, he would join with me in the greatest civil rights struggle of this generation -- the recognition of the unborn child's basic right to life."

With all of these seemingly insurmountable problems, it's easy to become discouraged and do nothing.

But let us take heart in that Christ Jesus has already ushered in the kingdom of God, which will reach its completion in the Father's good time. Until then, our job is to help advance his kingdom, one step at a time.

In the words of King, "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step!"

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