



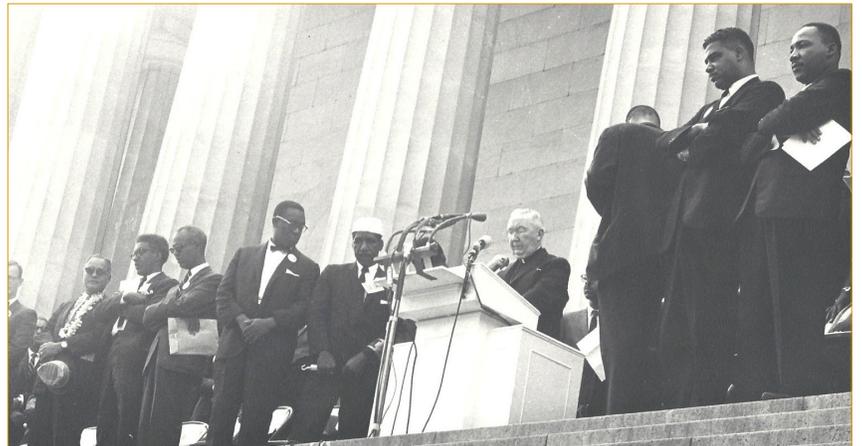
BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MARYLAND CATHOLIC CONFERENCE JANUARY 16, 2014

Standing Together for Freedom – In Honor of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Standing with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 50 years ago on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial was Washington Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle who delivered the invocation. Archbishop O'Boyle, dedicated to seeking justice for all people, integrated local Catholic parishes and schools shortly after he became archbishop in 1948.



The Catholic Church has long fought for racial equality, and the civil rights of African Americans. As far back as 1799, Catholic orders of nuns in DC and Maryland such as the Visitation and the Oblate Sisters flouted existing prohibitions by educating free and enslaved African Americans.

In the 1960s, Baltimore's own Cardinal Shehan, a well-known civil rights leader, faced vocal opposition for advocating for open-housing legislation and equal accommodations for African Americans.

In Baltimore City, St. Frances Academy is the oldest Catholic educational institution with African American roots. Established in 1828, it is an independent Catholic high school serving as an agent of positive change within its inner-city neighborhood.

St. Frances Academy's founding mission was to teach "children of color to read the Bible" – an illegal act during an era of American slavery. One of its founders was Mother Mary Lange, a candidate for sainthood within the Catholic Church.

The achievements of SFA students are inspirational. With three of every four students living in a single-parent household and 35% living in a household with an income below the poverty line, students achieve extraordinary academic success, and 95% of them enroll in college.