



The Beloved Community

The term “The Beloved Community” was developed by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce in the early 20th century. However, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who made it famous and brought deeper meaning through his work in the civil rights movement.

At its core, Dr. King’s vision of The Beloved Community was inclusivity. The King Center explains:

- Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth.
- In The Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it.
- Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.

King’s Vision is our Vision

For King, The Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian goal often confused with the image of the Peaceable Kingdom depicted in biblical scripture, in which lions and lambs live in harmony. For him, The Beloved Community was attainable in society through the work of people committed to nonviolence.

King’s vision was not absent of conflict, but affirmed that conflict was part of human experience. It was how conflict was addressed that set the community apart. King believed that conflict could be resolved peacefully, and opposition could be reconciled through a mutual commitment to nonviolence and the goodwill of all.

In his speech, *Birth of A New Nation*, King said, “The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of The Beloved Community. The aftermath of nonviolence is redemption. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation. The aftermath of violence is emptiness and bitterness.” King viewed society’s ultimate goal as integration, that is genuine intergrouping of people and interpersonal living. For him this can only be achieved through nonviolence, for the aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation, redemption and the creation of the Beloved Community.

King’s core value for The Beloved Community was agape love, “understanding, redeeming goodwill for all,” an “overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative”...“the love of God operating in the human heart.” He said that “Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people...It begins by loving others for their sakes” and “makes no distinction between a friend and enemy; it is directed toward both...Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community.” King viewed justice for all people as an expression of this love in community. King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” He believed justice was the birthright of every human being in The Beloved Community. He said “ I have fought too long hard against segregated public accommodations to end up segregating my moral concerns. Justice is indivisible.”



At Room In The Inn, our core values reflect those of King’s Beloved Community. Our core values are:
*Through the power of **spirituality** and the practice of **love**, we provide **hospitality** with a **respect** that offers **hope** in a **community** of **non-violence**.*



Saint Katharine Drexel

Saint Katharine Drexel is known as the patron saint of racial justice and philanthropists. She has also, most recently, become the newest friend to Room In The Inn. In September of 2020, Room In The Inn acquired new property with its history linked to Saint Katharine Drexel's legacy.

The new property was formerly the location of one of Nashville's first schools for African American children for the first half of its life, founded by Katharine Drexel at the turn of the 20th century. Despite protests from neighbors and the property's former owner, The Academy of the Immaculate Mother opened in 1905 at what is now 701 Drexel St.

The school initially taught female students housewifery, music, fine arts, literature and science. It expanded to include male students and, eventually, a teacher-training academy. In 1954, male students at the school integrated Father Ryan High School more than a decade before most schools in the city desegregated

Saint Katharine Drexel's Legacy

Born to a wealthy family in Philadelphia in 1858, Katharine Drexel received an excellent education and traveled widely. After tending to her stepmother through a three-year terminal illness, she realized that material wealth did not provide immunity to hardship in life and she decided to utilize her wealth to benefit society.

Katharine had always been interested in the plight of Native Americans. While on a trip through Europe, she met Pope Leo XIII and asked him to send more missionaries to Wyoming for her friend Bishop James O'Connor. The pope replied, "Why don't you become a missionary?" His answer shocked her into considering new possibilities. Once back in the states, Katharine visited the Dakotas, met the Sioux leader and began her missionary career.

Katharine Drexel was considered agreeable for marriage, especially with her social stature, but after much discernment, she decided to become a nun. After three and a half years of training, Katharine Drexel and her first order of nuns—Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored—opened a boarding school in Santa Fe, which was the first of many schools they would found. By 1942, she had a system of Catholic schools for African Americans in 13 states, plus 40 mission centers and 23 rural schools. Segregationists opposed her work, even burning a school in Pennsylvania. In all, she established 50 missions for Indians in 16 states.

Her crowning achievement was the founding of Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic university for African Americans in the United States.

In 1935, at age 77, Katharine Drexel suffered a heart attack and was forced to retire. She died at age 96 in 1954 and was canonized in 2000.

