Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was “A paragon of global nonviolence, the archetypal African-American hero and perhaps the greatest American of the 20th century,” keynote speaker Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core and an Oxford-educated scholar and author, said in front of more than 600 people gathered at the 20th annual breakfast that bears the name of the civil rights leader.

He called King an “interfaith hero” for embracing the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi as a Christian.

While a student at Crozer Seminary, King attended a lecture by the first black president of Howard University, Mordecai Johnson, who described the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi as a prime example of Christian love.

“King thinks to himself, ‘What can I learn from the way that Mahatma Gandhi activates nonviolence in a social reform movement in India that releases that subcontinent from English colonial rule?’” Patel (left) said. “What can I learn from this Hindu from India on what it means to practice Christian nonviolence?”

Patel discussed the lessons King learned from Gandhi and how he implemented them during the nonviolent bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., and the march in Selma, where blacks, whites, Baptists, Jews, Catholics and Protestants walked hand-in-hand against injustice and inequality.

“Selma was an interfaith movement,” Patel said. “America was born as a country in which people could orient around religion differently and regard each other as friends and allies to work with, not enemies to hate. This country was born as a nation where people from different religious communities look at each other and say, ‘How can we work together?’

“King leads the way on that for us,” he said.
King’s call for nonviolence and interfaith collaboration still needs to be realized in many communities, according to Kejuan Glosson (left), an accounting major from Milwaukee, Wis., who was a recipient of a King Scholarship.

“In some ways we’re getting closer to his dream,” he said.

Eryn Krueger, a Management major from Mechanicsburg, Ill., also received a King Scholarship.

Benedictine University president William J. Carroll, Ph.D., who established the breakfast that commemorates King and his legacy, said that people must focus on their sameness, not their differences, and celebrate King’s message every day, not just once a year.

“We have to come together as a faith community, not communities,” he said. “It’s a task that’s never over. Celebrating his legacy on his birthday has set this opportunity up wonderfully, but it needs to be every day.

We have a receptive audience out there. We need to find ways of reinforcing his message every single day.”

The message must also begin in the home, said NICOR president Beth Reese (left), whose company sponsors the breakfast and who introduced the keynote speaker.

“I think about the conversations that I have with my daughter versus the conversations my parents had with me,” Reese said.

“They’re very different, and a lot of that is because of the work of King and the people who followed King.”

James Pelech, Ph.D., an associate professor at Benedictine and chairman of the Board of Specified Jurisdiction at St. Ethelreda Grammar School, a Benedictine partner on the South Side of Chicago, said King’s message of love must also be emphasized in the classroom.

“I really think it goes back to what our speaker said today... the idea of one binding thing, and that’s love,” Pelech said. “At St. Ethelreda School, whether we say it’s Christ’s love or King’s love, it’s just love. It’s really an open school and we talk about being open to everyone and loving everyone.”

Where the message comes from is unimportant, Pelech said.

“I think a lot of times we’re living that message without really saying who it came from,” he said. “But I think when we talk to the parents of our students, King’s and Christ’s messages get combined. It’s just one big message of love.”

Benedictine students in Lisle and Mesa put King’s message of community building into action.
Christine Fletcher (Theology) recently published the book, “24/7 Christian: The Secular Vocation of the Laity,” which explores the Second Vatican Council’s universal call to holiness, the freedom of conscience and the role of the laity in the world together with the wisdom of “The Rule of St. Benedict” to provide a practical guide to becoming a Christian 24/7. The book was printed by Liturgical Press. She also wrote an article, “The Virtue of Chastity: Lessons on Love from Jane Austen and Dorothy Sayers,” that appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald on February 13.

Jason Horay (Online Master of Public Health), a Benedictine adjunct, was selected as one of The Wellness Council of America’s Top 100 Health Promotion Professionals. Horay is the health promotion coordinator for the North Carolina Medical Society Employee Benefit Plan. The Top 100 Health Promotion Professionals were chosen by peer voting and the empirical review of a judging panel based on submissions from health promotion professionals who are currently creating, coordinating and maintaining ongoing health promotion programs; have implemented innovative solutions for health improvement and culture change; are leaders and role models in business and the community; have an inspiring vision for the future of the industry; and have demonstrated a desire to be the next leaders in health promotion.

Joyce Jeewek (Education) was published as a co-author in an article with members of the Chapter Services Committee of the International Honor Society in Education, Kappa Delta Pi, titled “Meetings to Go: Convenient Professional Development” in The New Teacher Advocate, Winter 2014 edition. The article provides information regarding podcasts and encourages educators to participate in research-based educational webinars as part of their ongoing professional development.


Pete Nelson (Physics) was invited to speak during a workshop titled “Teaching Science Like We Do Science: Integrating Research and Education” at the Biophysical Society 59th Annual Meeting held in Baltimore, Md., in February. Nelson’s presentation, “Keep Reading and Do Science: A Diffusive Model of Osmosis,” addressed teaching materials and the active-learning approach that he has developed for the Physics for Life Sciences course that he is designing. Nelson, who represented the University on the Biophysical Society Education Committee, also presented a research paper titled “Single-file water permeation through aquaporin channels.” Nelson also gave an oral presentation, “Osmosis, Colligative Properties, Entropy, Free Energy and the Chemical Potential,” at the American Association of Physics Teachers Winter Meeting in January in San Diego, Calif., in a session titled “Updates and Resources for Introductory Physics for Life Science.” Nelson presented a novel model of osmosis and a new pedagogy that introduces life science majors to thermodynamics using the new osmosis model. This material will also be used in the “Physics for Life Sciences” course. His work was funded by National Science Foundation Grant DUE-0836833.

Teresa J. Parker (Fine Art) exhibited recent works on paper in March for the 2015 International Caucus of the Women’s Caucus for Art and its United Nations Program, in New York, N.Y. She also produced several prints that were on display at the Universidad de El Salvador.

Additionally, she has several prints included in a group printmaking exhibition shown at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture Gallery in Karachi, Pakistan.

James Pelech, MeShelda Jackson and Ovid Wong (School of Education) and members of the St. Ethelreda Board of Specified Jurisdiction were notified by the National Catholic Educational Association that the board was named one of five recipients of the “Outstanding Board Award.” Pelech, as president of the board, will receive the award in April in Orlando, Fla. The board, along with the Big Shoulders Fund, has worked to support the school in its efforts to bring the finest Catholic education to its students. Board participation is just one facet of Benedictine’s commitment to St. Ethelreda. Through the efforts of Benedictine University President William J. Carroll, a partnership has been established that includes free tuition to Benedictine for any St. Ethelreda student who goes to high school, maintains a “B” average and desires to teach. Another component of the partnership is the professional development provided to the teachers of St. Ethelreda in the areas of math, science and English language arts provided by Pelech and Wong.

David Rubush (Chemistry) recently published a review article in the Encyclopedia of Reagents for Organic Synthesis titled “Diphenylphosphoric Acid.” DOI: 10.1002/047084289X.m01742.

Ovid Wong (Education) in partnership with the Fermi Science Education Center used the lab facilities to investigate the properties of light to prepare teacher candidates to teach science in alignment with the Illinois Learning Standards for Science and the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. He also published a peer-reviewed article titled “Using the Knowledge Types-Levels Matrix to Analyze Student Teaching” in Spectrum, Volume 40, Number 2. The article describes the pattern of teaching to indicate the frequency of using a specific knowledge type/level over a predetermined time range. Spectrum is the official journal of the Illinois Science Teachers Association.

Jan Writer (Education) presented a peer-reviewed presentation and paper at the 2015 International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability and Developmental Disabilities in Clearwater, Fla. Her interactive session, “I Can Speak for Myself! Strategies that Foster Reciprocal Communication with Students Who Have Significant Disabilities,” detailed diverse strategies for enhancing the communication competence of children and youth with intellectual disabilities, autism, orthopedic impairments and multiple disabilities. The conference was produced by the International Council for Exceptional Children’s Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, for which Writer currently serves on the Critical Issues, Professional Development and Professional Standards Leadership Committees. Writer was also selected to give a peer-reviewed presentation and paper at the 2015 Illinois Council for Exceptional Children state convention. Her session, “Eye on Empowerment: Visual Supports that Foster the Active Participation and Personal Independence of Students with Significant Disabilities,” is designed as a skill-building workshop for practicing educators of students with intellectual disabilities, autism, orthopedic impairments and multiple disabilities.