DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

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12 JAN 2001

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

I recently attended a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance Service coordinated by Captain Rick Gates, Command Chaplain at NAWCAD, Patuxent River, MD. I was greatly impressed by the quality of this remarkable service with its extraordinary video and slide presentations, sense of God's presence and numerous participants. I was most impressed with the diverse composition of the participants: all races, creeds and colors took part. The chaplains, Religious Program Specialists and other program organizers showed how a creative team develops and promotes an inclusive remembrance ceremony attended and appreciated by a diverse group of Americans.

Recently, Rear Admiral Lou Iasiello, Deputy Chief of Chaplains & Chaplain of the Marine Corps, sent the following message to chaplains and Religious Program Specialists serving with Marines. It clearly communicates our Chaplain Corps' mandate to "care for all" Sea Services members and their families. Chaplain Iasiello writes:

> One of the great hallmarks of every faith community is hospitality. In fact, it may be said that the real measure of a community is the depth of the hospitality it has in its heart. Beyond the casual greeting at the chapel door lies the real challenge of hospitality: and that is the embrace of diversity. In welcoming both neighbor and stranger we open ourselves to new realities, new purpose, new visions. Only by respecting diversity can we truly learn what we share in common. It is on that firm ground that we can weep together over commonly experienced tragedies, laugh over commonly perceived incongruities, and together condemn recognized injustices.
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> Our Nation honors diversity most clearly in its annual remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Doctor King remains a shining example of a faith-based embrace of our common humanity, an example of someone who embraced, celebrated, and capitalized on the diversity of our human existence. As chaplains and RPs, Martin Luther King celebrations and

commemorations are excellent opportunities to commemorate the great gift God has bestowed on us in the rich diverse traditions, races, cultures, and creeds found in the Sea Services.

As…spiritual leaders, I encourage you to celebrate this diversity with the People of God, the community that God has entrusted to your care. I urge you to celebrate the diversity of our human family and the potential it holds for our military family. I urge you to stand at the center of our Nation's many cultural, racial, and creedal traditions with hands outstretched to apparent opposites... to become God's conduits for new communal growth and enlightenment. God has given us a great gift in our diversity; let us celebrate it together.

Thank you for giving so much of yourself in service to God and Country. The innovative, life transforming service you so selflessly provide to our Nation's young men and women, contributes significantly to their quality of life and to making America an even better Nation. God Bless You!

Cordially,

Barry C. Black

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy