

**From:** The President  
**Sent:** Monday, April 25, 2016 2:43 PM  
**To:** The President <[thepresident@loyola.edu](mailto:thepresident@loyola.edu)>  
**Subject:** Reflecting on the unrest in Baltimore City a year later

Dear Members of the Loyola Community,

One year ago this week, in the wake of the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody, unrest broke out in Baltimore City. Here at Loyola, while our campuses were not physically touched by those events, we were all emotionally affected. We came together as a community to reflect, to pray, and to consider how best to respond.

Before those difficult days for our city, I would have described Loyola University Maryland as particularly involved and invested in our Baltimore community. The unrest served as an essential wake-up call for each of us individually, however, and for us as a campus community. Since those days, we have reflected on what it means to be the Jesuit university in this city—a university that was founded not just for Catholics, but for Baltimore. We have asked ourselves how we are called to step up, redouble our efforts, invest greater resources, and strengthen and support the members of our Baltimore community.

That reflection, that conversation, is still very much underway. If we have learned anything over the past decade as we have become increasingly active in the York Road Corridor, just east of our Evergreen campus, we know that to work effectively in our city we must serve as a partner, working alongside and with those who understand best our community's specific needs, challenges, and opportunities.

We are embracing our role as an integral, committed institution in this city. Susan Donovan, Ph.D., executive vice president, is focusing on how we can more fully live out Loyola's mission—and particularly in the city of Baltimore. We have refocused the priorities of our \$100 million comprehensive campaign, *Bright Minds, Bold Hearts*. Just a few weeks ago, Loyola was a sponsor of Light City Baltimore, a week-long celebration of Baltimore's innovation and history. Of course, in the Jesuit sense of the *magis*, we are called to give and do more. And we will. Our emerging strategic plan, in its direct and bold vision, reminds us of our roots and commitment to our city and challenges us to achieve greater excellence in all that we do moving forward.

At the same time, we know that to be the partner and resource we need to be to our community, Loyola University Maryland must recognize the history of racial injustice in the United States, which extends back generations in the history of our nation and of the Society of Jesus itself. Recently *The New York Times* reported that Georgetown University sold 272 enslaved African-Americans in 1838 to raise funds for that university. Although that incident occurred prior to Loyola's founding in 1852, it nonetheless is a deeply troubling chapter in the history of the Society of Jesus. I hope that as we look back on that time, we take this opportunity to recommit ourselves always, always to respect the rights of persons, work to give voice to the voiceless, and act with hearts of justice and compassion.

Here at Loyola, we recognize that we must work to become a more just, welcoming, and inclusive campus community where we can engage in open dialogue about our differences—and respect and value those differences. Civil discourse is integral in a democratic society and in the life of a university. As we engage in these conversations, let us keep in mind that empathy and openness to others' experiences is characteristic of the love of neighbor Jesus speaks of in the Gospels. I am confident our community will benefit from the training now being developed through the work of our new Presidential Task Force for Racial Justice Training. With purpose and resolve, we must come together to fight racial injustice and intolerance in our own campus community, as well as in the greater community.

“We plant the seeds that one day will grow,” Archbishop Oscar Romero is quoted as saying. “We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.”

This week as we reflect on the events of last April, I hope you will join me in planting new seeds and watering those that have been planted. Together as members both of the Loyola community and the Baltimore community, we can look forward to the great promise that the future holds.

Rev. Brian F. Linnane, S.J.  
President