



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

Friday, January 13, 2012

To the Editor:

As we approach the holiday commemorating the achievements of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mayor Rahm Emmanuel has once again ignored the greater religious community of our city by severely reducing the number of religious leaders invited by the Mayor to participate in the city's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Breakfast. While some religious communities have been invited to participate officially, many more were simply ignored. As a former President of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, I fear this was no mere coincidence or oversight.

The importance of Dr. King was recognized early by the late Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America who marched side by side with the great crusader for civil rights in Selma, Alabama. This fact was even featured on the cover of *Life* magazine (March 26, 1965). To be ignored on such an important occasion for all the citizens of our city is not only hurtful to Orthodox Christians of all ethnic backgrounds, but seems to be a marked effort to minimize the importance of the many religious communities in our civic life.

Since the days of his inauguration, this trend by the Mayor to minimize the importance and presence of religious leaders is not only a strong contrast with the previous administration, but detrimental to the achievements of our inter-religious community—the most diverse in the country—for a uniquely cooperative presence in Chicago for the benefit of all citizens. I pray Mayor Emmanuel's apparent distaste for religious presence will soon cease, for our collective presence, mutual respect, and cooperation with each other and our civil leadership has been one of Chicago's strengths of the last decade.

Sincerely,

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos
Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago