



## **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Interfaith Service**

Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade

Monday, January 21, 2013

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good afternoon, I'm Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council and a member of the SF Human Rights Commission. I join our Chair Rita Semel in welcoming you to this auspicious dual celebration, the Birthday of Civil Rights Leader the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 2<sup>nd</sup> inauguration of the first African-American President Barack Obama.

It is appropriate that we should come together for prayer and thanksgiving, in an interfaith celebration as, not only was Dr. King a pastor of immeasurable faith, but every social justice and civil rights movement marked in our nation's history has been led by leaders of faith. In particular, here in San Francisco, in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, before there was the San Francisco Interfaith Council, faith leaders from every tradition came together, through the Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concerns to proclaim, with a unified and prophetic voice, the Almighty's call for freedom and equality for all people. At that same time our City responded to unconscionable and pressing racial injustices being perpetrated, by forming the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, the official independent

body of our City charged with stewardship of discrimination cases in San Francisco. It was as Director of that Commission that Mayor Edwin Lee began his career in public service.

On this day Mayor Lee is proudly representing our City in Washington, DC at the inauguration of President Obama. We are grateful to have with us, in his stead, Acting Mayor and District 10 Supervisor, Malia Cohen. Supervisor Cohen we invite you forward to bring us greetings on behalf of the City.