



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

Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade

Monday, January 20, 2014

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good afternoon, I'm Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council. I join our Chair Maggi Henderson in welcoming you to this auspicious celebration, the Birthday of Civil Rights Leader the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We would be remiss if we did not extend a huge shout out of thanks to our friends at the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and MJM Management Group, for their incredible generosity in making this precious public space, in the back-drop of the magnificent MLK Memorial, available for this event.

It is appropriate that we should come together today 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 a 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.

That prophetic voice has come not only from religious leaders, but from those whose faith has inspired them to answer the call to public service. We, in this City of Saint Francis, are blessed to be represented in Congress by just such a luminary of incredible faith. Please join me in welcoming the Democratic Leader of the United States House of Representatives, The Honorable Nancy Pelosi!

We have with us today not one, but three generations of Pelosi women. In addition to welcoming our Democratic Leader we also welcome her daughter, Christine and her daughter, Bella! For the better part of a year the SFIC has worked closely with Christine on a ground-breaking project, a powerful exhibit formed to honor the courage and conviction of people coming together and building "bridges of hope" to reduce gun violence. We are parents, friends and activists working to highlight the root causes of violence for which guns are the deadly accelerators. "Bridges of Hope" salutes people and communities who have been impacted by gun violence. Through this effort and your participation, we hope to send a message of hope for others. As part of our mission, we also encourage everyone to support the San Francisco Bay Area people and organizations featured in our work. With community organizing, mental health counseling, religious outreach, healing circles, public policy advocacy and daily inspiration, together we can address the root causes of violence and keep building bridges of hope to a future without the scourge of gun violence.

At last, we wish to extend special thanks to President of the Board of Supervisors, David Chiu, and Supervisors London Breed, Malia Cohen, Eric Mar, and Scott Wiener for joining us today. And at this time we invite President Chiu, a dear friend of the Council, to offer a welcome on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco.