



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

Virtual Commemoration

Monday, January 17, 2022

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good Morning, I'm Michael Pappas and on behalf of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, I want to welcome you to this morning's Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith observance. This virtual gathering is offered in the spirit of the annual March and Interfaith Celebration hosted by our Council at the Yerba Buena Gardens.

It is appropriate that we should come together today for prayer and thanksgiving 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, under the auspices of the Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concerns to proclaim with a unified voice the Almighty's call for Freedom and equality for all people.

The January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack on the United States Capitol and the subsequent widespread and systematic efforts to suppress voting rights and thus further disenfranchise and marginalize the most vulnerable sectors from participating in our Nation's most treasured democratic foundational tenet, are painful reminders that Dr. King's dream has yet to be fulfilled. Sadly, more than a half a century later, we find ourselves gathered at a surreal time, when our nation has never been more divided; when basic human and civil rights have never been more threatened; and when the ugliness of racism and discrimination are at a dangerous precipice. Yet as people of faith, we are neither deterred nor discouraged. Rather, inspired by the words, spirit and sacrifice of Dr. King, we lift our voices in the name of righteousness, in the hope that truth and justice will prevail.

In this spirit, dear people of faith, let us be resolute and vigilant in our pursuit of justice so that we may know true hope, and may our time together this morning inspire us to

walk with Dr. King, spiritually, hand in hand with one another, in our collective quest for freedom and equality for all!

It is said that in times of crisis, people define and show their true selves. When the history books are written, San Francisco Mayor London Breed's courageous, discerning and distinguished leadership in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic will be recorded as a model for our nation. Her profound life journey, deep rooted investment in family, faith and community, and unconditional love for our beloved City, collectively prepared her for the leadership demanded at this defining moment. Madam Mayor, a tenet common to so many of our religious traditions is to pray for our civic leaders and those who protect us. God has heard our prayer. With gratitude and respect we welcome and invite the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco London Nicole Breed to address us.

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Here in the City of St. Francis, we are particularly blessed to be represented in Congress by a leader who lives and speaks the powerful words of our patron saint and, in doing so, reflects the best of San Francisco Values. As Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi is fighting tirelessly to defend voting rights, the rule of law, equality, and providing for the essential needs of all people, as our government navigates us through these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In the spirit of Dr. King's prophetic voice, her commitment to civil and human rights has profoundly helped bend the arc of history toward justice.

It is a great privilege to welcome and invite to address us on this auspicious occasion, our Member of Congress, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honorable Nancy Pelosi.