



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

Virtual Commemoration

Monday, January 18, 2021

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 is a painful reminder that Dr. King's dream has yet to be fulfilled, as we and the entire globe witnessed those with hate in their hearts and malice in their souls violently attempt to put asunder the very foundation of liberty and freedom upon which this great nation was built. But in the spirit of Dr. King, the voices of righteousness and truth thankfully prevailed.

Yet our work, as people of faith, is far from over. 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.

As is voiced in the theme of this year's MLK Day observance, we see JUSTICE & HOPE on the horizon. If that is so, 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.