



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

Yerba Buena Gardens
Monday, January 21, 2019

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

As the psalmist proclaimed, “How good and pleasant it is for sisters and brothers to dwell together in Unity.”

Dear friends, that’s just what we are doing here today, as this year’s celebration theme frames the day, “WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!”

I’m Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council and today I join our Chair Kaushik Roy and our founder and Past Chair Rita Semel, 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 backdrop of the magnificent MLK Memorial, available for this event.

Let’s also have a resounding round of applause for the Tabernacle Community Development Corporation, whose generous support helped to underwrite expenses for today’s Interfaith Celebration.

On November 8, 2016, life for our nation changed both dramatically and irreversibly. Overnight we found hard fought-for basic human and civil rights never more threatened and at risk. Since then, we’ve been challenged to face profound new realities never imagined and the time sensitive call for unity, to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable sectors of our City and our nation. Feeling the weight of history, we as the San Francisco Interfaith Council, who give voice to our City’s vast and diverse communities of faith, pledged and continue to pledge that we will neither shrink from, nor abdicate the critical role to which we are being called, namely to exert our moral authority, exercise our prophetic voice and fearlessly stand at the forefront of the

movement to protect, advocate for and advance human rights, social justice and equality for all! To do less would betray this Council's mission of bringing people of a spectrum of faiths together, to celebrate our diversity, to build understanding and to serve our community.

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 both proud and blessed to be represented in Congress by just such a luminary whose faith expresses itself through action. It give me incredible personal joy at this critical moment in our Nation's history to invite you to join me in welcoming the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives the Honorable Nancy Pelosi!