



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Remarks and Invocation for the Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Prayer Service January 17, 2016

Good afternoon and blessings my sisters and brothers.

I am pleased to welcome each of you to St. Gerard Catholic Church.

Today, we pray, we march, we hope and we dream for equality and solidarity in a world that yearns for peace. When Pope Francis spoke to the United States Congress, he reminded us of the "Dreams" of Dr. Martin Luther King. He said, "Here, I think of the march which Martin Luther King led from Selma to Montgomery fifty years ago as a part of his 'dream' of full civil and political rights for African Americans. That dream continues to inspire us all."

At the conclusion of Dr. King's historic march, he shared this message with the people of the United States. "We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man."

What we do here today is necessary. This interfaith prayer service is a moment of grace, in which we proclaim that peace is possible; and our dream is alive. Today our prayers give living evidence of the prophetic words of Dr. King; "Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

By our presence here today we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King as a community, as a nation, and a family...as children of God.

Sadly, we live at a time of testing and fear. We must not let fear rob us of our dreams. We must continue to be source of God's mercy and compassion.

The journey of Dr. King in search of his dream led him through darkest of valleys. But he was always animated by his dream and his faith. He knew that he was not alone. Dr. King understood the meaning of the Psalmist words, "Even when I walk through a dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side; your rod and your staff give me courage." (Psalm 23)

Let us pray,

Lord, walk with us in these threatening times of darkness and help unite us in our dream of a lasting and just peace for all. Give us the courage to stand up for the rights for which Dr. King worked so faithfully.

As our brothers and sisters, here in our neighborhoods and throughout the world, seek refuge from injustice and violence, may we be instruments of your mercy and compassion.

Lord, let us not be a divided people, but help us to be united as your children. When we pray, let us pray for one another.

When we raise our voices, let it be for the common good.

When we march, let us march for a cause and on a path that leads us to peace.

May we always be mindful of the spirit of Dr. King as his words echo in our hearts; "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only Light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only Love can do that."

Lord, You are the source of the light that leads us to love. We pray that your peace which "surpasses all understanding" will fill our hearts and unite us in your name.

Amen.