>> DR. LISA REITER: Good evening.

Good evening.

We will start our formal program in a few minutes. Until we do that, I would like to invite you, if you would like to get a refill on your plate or beverages, to do so, and then we'll begin our formal program.

>> Testing.

>> DR. LISA REITER: Good evening.

My name is Dr. Lisa Reiter, and I am the director of campus ministry and also oversee community service and action here at Loyola University. On behalf of Loyola University and the planning committee of the university's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration, welcome to this evening's interfaith dialogue.

It says if you do not have a program, please take one from one of
Dr. King was an ordained Baptist minister and a trained theologian. He was a man of faith and of action, who not only believed the Bible's message of the oppressed and freedom for all but also worked tirelessly for civil rights. As a man of deep religious faith, he recognized the power of religion and the importance of learning about other religions as well as collaborating with the people from various faith traditions.

In the spirit of Dr. King, tonight we gather together with campus ministers and leaders of Loyola's faith based students who will share their faith based perspectives on civil rights and justice and how they put these ideals into practice.

Afterwards, we will have time to reflect on what we have learned, and then enter into dialogue with those who sit at table with us.

Let us know take a moment of silence to calm our minds, and open our hearts to hear inspiring messages of faith and justice.

>> KARAN RAMI: Good evening, everyone. My name is Karan Rami, and I'm the public relations chair for Loyola's Hindu based organization. It is an honor to be with today and to speak about action and dialogue to celebrate and uphold the values from Dr. King. Before I begin, I would like to thank the executive council on diversity and inclusion and also Joseph Saucedo and Dr. John Paul Salay from campus ministry for bringing us all together tonight.

I will begin with a few words by Dr. King himself.

Change the world by changing yourself. Heal the world by healing yourself. Service is the greatest form of spiritual practice. Everybody can be great because everybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. In the religious text it is noted that the God teaches us at the beginning, mankind and the principle of sacrifice mean selfless service were created together in order to bring advocacy. (Inaudible) is a Sanskrit word meaning selfless service (inaudible) or redeeming. It is one of the world's oldest languages and it's wildly used in Buddhism and Hinduism. (Inaudible) spiritual and at the same time contribute to the improvement of a community. This is the art of giving with no need to receive for the act itself is a gift for everyone involved. Sava is the act of blessed action.

In the devotional tradition of yoga (inaudible) or preparing for a ceremony. Or feeding people who don't have food. Noticeably Dr. King mentioned in forms of being selfless and to help others. To strengthen equality, to stand together. Individuals should unconditionally serve others when the situation calls on it, and this principle has inspired philanthropist, activists like Gandhi and Dr. King himself whose lifes and values we are commemorating (inaudible) Hindu holiday, a traditional dance (inaudible) it's a nine day holiday where we celebrate the overcoming of evil in life. We have our own group every year and 100 percent of the benefits go to the philanthropy organizations that were selected that year. This year was the foundation of child's rights and youth, also known as CRY, whose mission is to overcome child abuse.
Over 800 people showed up. The central spiritual teachings of Hinduism (inaudible) for the betterment of others and without expectations is always the higher path and that each and every living thing is by his or her very nature divine.

However, the Hindu tradition particularly also contain various accounts of the caste which is known to discriminate against people based on what occupation they have. The most (inaudible) and his body was offered at the sacrifice. (Inaudible) or classes came from his mouth, his arms, his thighs and his feet. The mouth represented the priest, and was the highest. The warrior was next. Then the peasant, and then the servant, that's the feet. Caste based discrimination occurs in areas of India (inaudible) and another. But does that really matter if we know people are suffering? Even in modern times, discriminating (inaudible) caste based discrimination treating people as lesser (inaudible) what Hinduism stands for. In the Hindu tradition it contains various accounts of this, we must do our best to present equality, even in the face of such inequality. As you can tell, religion offers many positive things. And tells us to serve others with Sava or to love our neighbors. However, sometimes us humans mess it up and start to interpret religion in ways that cause us to discriminate against groups of people and we must work hard to prevent it. Hinduism has many gods, all stemming from one God, the multiple gods are different forms of one God. (Inaudible) many gods is the belief in the central. What they do agree on is that Hinduism is flexible. Just because I'm a Hindu does not mean I cannot likewise be Catholic or partake in many other religions. We must learn to see love in all of us and grace us. We must learn not to generalize. We must learn to appreciate and care for all, even if they are different. We must hope for the best in others. We must learn to serve and we must learn to love.

Thank you.

(Appause.)

>> HANNAH BLOOMBERG: Hi, everyone. My name is Hannah Bloomberg and I'm a part of campus ministry and Chicago Hillel. Thing that all for being here. I'm thrilled to be in a space on is a celebration of the legacy of Dr. King and also faith as well and sharing this with all of you.

For any of my students that are here or my colleagues in campus ministry, you know that anytime anyone asks me a question about Judaism, the first thing I start with is well, it depends who you ask.

(Laughter.)

And that is something that I really truly firmly believe, because one of my favorite things about Judaism is that our texts and tradition is almost entirely based off a series of arguments between a bunch of rabbis, and the result of that is that each read of the text came late to different interpretations and different perspectives. So I grew up in a congregation that emphasized service. Every Sunday during Hebrew school, a portion of our day every Sunday was spent learning about social
issues in our community or partaking in some sort of service project, and my favorite days of the year happened four times — four Sundays a year, where the entire day was a mitzvah day. Mitzvah translates to commandment and generally speaking refers in Judaism to any commandment given by God or really any good deed in general. We would travel as an entire class and the entire school to various sites throughout the area where I grew up. The incredible people throughout the community learned together and volunteered. It was through my synagogue that I developed a passion for advocacy. So what I'd like to share with you today are a few of the texts that I grew up learning that still shape how I think about advocacy and action. The very first one comes from a work called (inaudible) which translates to ethics or wisdom of the fathers.

It says the world stands on three things. Torah, service, and acts of loving countenance. We could spend a very long time unpacking that one line but I'd like to stay on a relatively surface level and we'll get how this line comments on the relationship between contemplation and action.

Torah, which in this sense talks about our responsibility to study, to learn the words of God and to understand what those words say, in my mind represents the contemplation piece of this. Now, the other two, service and acts of loving kindness, two-thirds of this equation, I don't think it's a coincidence that those two-thirds center around action, and from this I derive the importance of taking action. That our actions, service and acts of loving kindness, two of the three pillars that the world stands upon, are informed by our learning and our study, but that ultimately that action piece and what we can do and our responsibility is the majority of the pillars that the world stands on.

So my next question from there is, well, to what degree am I responsible? What counts as enough? Which is when we arrive at another line from (inaudible), you are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to desist from it.

I think that from this, I think about a sort of internal tension. My desire is to never be complicit to injustices in the world, and yet when I look around me, I see so many injustices that sometimes I feel overwhelmed and that to a certain extent, complicity is unavoidable. So for me this text challenges me to think about how I need to care for myself in order to be able to even advocate for others.

But still within that, okay, I will desist, but that helps a little. I still have some serious questions.

Spoiler alert, (inaudible) the ethics of the fathers and rabbis never give you any real answers, but rather you're given a bunch of texts that serves as a framework for thinking and asking questions about our responsibility to advocate for others, who that responsibility extends to, and how we advocate.

For example, in Deuteronomy, chapter 15, verse 11, there's a line that pretty much states we're never going to run out of work to do. The
line states where there will never cease to be deprived (inaudible) brother, the impoverished and disadvantaged. This line is then commented on by a name (inaudible) a deprived relative takes precedence over all others (inaudible) one's city, the deprived of one's community before the deprived of another community, as it says to your sibling, to your impoverished and to the disadvantaged in your land.

Now, upon first reading, I remember reading that for the first time, and I was really troubled by it, because to me, it seemed that it created this sort of unfair hierarchy that was almost exclusive and tribalistic. However, upon further thought, I have decided to interpret it has a challenge. Knowing that again as we learn from earlier that I could never complete all of the work on my own, I use this as a framework to ask what steps am I taking to expand the boundaries of who I see as my (inaudible). Seeking out commonalities and shared values and a sense of shared purpose. Inspired to do this work, by these words from (inaudible) and also the legacy of people like Dr. King, is what challenges me and motivates me to move forward and continue contemplating the role that I play in this world and what my responsibility is to both myself and to others.

Here on campus, it's really exciting to be in an academic environment where there's so many opportunities to engage in those conversations and that work, and really inspiring to meet students, like all of you who are ready and willing and excited to do that, so I just want to highlight one opportunity that's coming up very soon. The flyers are on your table. But next week, we'll be hosting a workshop with a guest educator from Los Angeles, called difficult dialogues, holding multiple truths in the age of (inaudible) so I really encourage you to look at those workshops, if you want information, more than what's on the sheet I would love to talk with anyone who is interested and there's also more information on line, on Hillel Loyola's Facebook page. So thank you all again.

(Appplause.)

(Music interlude.)

>> RASHAWN WALLACE:  Hello. My name is Rashawn Wallace. I'm a leader of the Agape and Ecclesia Christian Fellowship (inaudible) our love of God and all of God's people of every ethnicity and culture.

I'm going to talk to you guys about how Dr. King fully embodied what it is exactly to love one another in the Christian faith. When you talk to a Christian, the first thing they go to in the Bible (inaudible) love and being fair and equality, they go to Mark 12, chapter 12 verse 31. Love thy neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than this.

But I think in today's age, that's changed. That's not the exact same way that it's been interpreted before. To me to love somebody else the same as you love yourself is not exclusive (inaudible) deserve to be loved. So I look towards John, chapter 13, verse 16. No servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
Essentially that could be turned into an entire sermon and that could be talked about in 30 minutes, but this is not a Baptist church.

(Laughter.)

Essentially those that are -- that have the power over other people, those that have power, that have control of what other people do and what other people will be able to -- for example, at work, you're the exact same (inaudible) also I would like to look at John, chapter 13 (inaudible) love one another, as I have loved you. So you must love one another.

In Christianity, I think we all know that Jesus Christ -- we believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, and (inaudible) greatest form of love that can be shown and that we can see. Because Christians believe that he didn't know everyone (inaudible) he didn't know everyone that was going to come to continuously send and continuously mess up -- continuously sin and continuously mess up. He still died and he was still the sacrifice that we all knew.

The last thing I want to look at is Leviticus (inaudible) when the foreigner resides among you and in your land, do not mistreat them (inaudible) treated as your native born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. (Inaudible).

We not only look towards how to be inclusive towards everybody but how to keep our foundation of what love really means to us, and when we look at how Jesus loved humanity and how he loved the church. So when it comes to trying to keep our firm roots and understand exactly how people are -- how they're feeling, again I refer back to Leviticus 19, it doesn't matter if they are native born, it doesn't matter if they are something that's come in from outside (inaudible) exactly the same thing that (inaudible) has strived to do.

Dr. King has I think the greatest point that we can live towards in our past, to show the embodiment of just trying to find equality for all, making sure that not only that everybody is represented, but that also that those that are in power, that they're not less than they really are.

So I guess what I'm trying to get at is just to encourage you guys to look towards each other for love and for grace. It's not about exactly where we've come from or where we're going or if you're born here or not or if you're in power with somebody else or if you -- just look towards love and make sure that everyone is together.

Thank you.

(Appause.)

>> SYEDA QADRI: I'm Syeda Qadri. I'm a sophomore and a sociology major, I'm also a Muslim which (inaudible) Islam is a religion (inaudible) and sometimes the words are confused so it's important that we get the term knowledge right. Also our Muslim chaplain here on Loyola is (inaudible) a great dude. I would recommend.

(Laughter.)

And also thanks to campus ministry (inaudible). So introductions aside, (inaudible) recognize the phrases earlier, which is (inaudible)
which is an Arabic phrase and (inaudible) it's an important word to Muslims because it's how we start our day, start a conversation, and we (inaudible) each other during our weekly Friday prayers. So we don't really (inaudible) important word and it simply translates to peace be upon you (inaudible) and so the word phrase is important because of the word (inaudible) peace and we think of peace, we have a general idea of what peace is. (Inaudible) we have a concept, but it's very rare that someone in the room has a solid definition of what peace actually is. If you do, (inaudible) and so when it comes to peace, I think of certain individual words as we do when it comes to any general concept or idea and so just starting off I think of happiness, happiness for all, so what are some words that you guys think of, you can shout out some words. Don't be shy. What do you think of when you think of peace?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Love.
>> SYEDA QADRI: Love. Love that. Anyone else?
>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Justice.
>> SYEDA QADRI: Justice.
>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Peace.
>> SYEDA QADRI: Peace. But also going off of peace, what are some images that come to your mind? Think about it. What's big triggered inside of you? And what do certain images not come to mind? Would you think of war images? Did you think of our own government? Do you think the government that we have now works for the peace and justice for its own society, the society that it works for? Do you think that it (inaudible) did you not think of (inaudible) and is there a reason behind that. So maybe go home, think about it, sleep on it if you're tired, but also think about what's happening inside of you. It's a result of your own independent thinking or is it also a result of your social atmosphere, what we've been fed throughout the years, however many years you've lived and because it does in large part affect our conscious and subconscious thinking. So when we think of civil rights we think of MLK. (Inaudible) and some background behind that is because my dad growing up would always say that the world will end (inaudible) and that's an Islamic idea. And I just always think of a tree, but when I ask my friends, I get a lot of answers. The most dark one is terrorism and that's the honest truth because that's been taught by the media, by social influences and this type of blacklisting of an entire group can be seen being done not just to Muslims but also many other groups and minorities, such as Black Americans, refugees, immigrant workers, (inaudible) politicians, you name it. So what's the point of asking this question? Asking myself or yourself these questions? It's a form of (inaudible) asking yourself these questions. Awareness of ourselves, our surroundings, our thinking, what's being cultivated, but also asking these questions, we can advocate and take action (inaudible) so apart from all that, when it comes to taking action (inaudible) what's the point of having interfaith? (Inaudible) why did I talk about Islam, what's the point of all that? Well Martin Luther King, for example, was a practicing Christian, he was a pastor at a church, but also he
is a Christian who played the most prominent role in the 20th century (inaudible) and that makes him the face of something large. Something massive, and he will always be a part of our history and he used his faith as a steering wheel for this moment. He used this quote, he said love is one of the most beautiful parts of parts of Christian faith (inaudible) and I just really that quote is beautiful.

And on the other side, there's Malcolm X. He also is a part of Martin Luther King's time. He was a Muslim and he also used social activism and his faith in the same way that Martin Luther King did. So he went on a spiritual journey to the Middle East and North Africa. He visited countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and he went on Haj, which is a pilgrimage to mecca. And he developed this universal aspect of brotherhood. He met people of all different colors and (inaudible) pilgrimage wears white, no matter what age or gender you are, because it's this idea that we're all the same, and he discovered this like I said, this idea of brotherhood, but before this, he had (inaudible) and when I say stern, he described it as (inaudible) and he had this idea of separatism, but after this spiritual journey he had changed this and he had a (inaudible) and so taking it back, so in the late 1700s, (inaudible) so France had this colony named St. Dominique which is now known as (inaudible) and rebels, and the Muslims were essential to the success of this revolution. So they were forcibly baptized and if they were lucky they got to keep their original names, and they were put through an immense amount of oppression and they had this concept of (inaudible) another word that's been used in the media. But it just translates to struggle and they had this struggle against the oppressors and that was key to their success. So in the Islamic principle, in the larger picture, and in the teachings of the prophet, social justice is critically important, as is in many other religions, you name it. And to the (inaudible) saying that anyone who sees evil doing, to change it (inaudible) by his tongue, but if he cannot do it change it by his heart and this is (inaudible) hand, tongue, and heart. (Inaudible) so we are urged by history's most prominent figures all time, time and time again to take action on an individual level. Live under this illusion that we are all independent autonomous beings but we're all social beings. We are all connected with one another. We all affect each other on a very profound level. (Inaudible) they're just wrong. (Inaudible) and so we in society are looking for the name king, the next leader, but in reality (inaudible) in ourselves, and (inaudible) if you've been looking at the news, for the recent Congress, 116th Congress, we have a record number of women, 102, including the first (inaudible) first American Muslim, and the largest ever black and Hispanic group of individuals, so diversity matters, and it truly does, especially in our government. So why is this (inaudible) as portrayed in the media when it should be celebrated. With that all being said, taking the most action as you can, try to be your own king, adapt to your surroundings and make the most of the life you have now.

So thank you.
(Applause.)

>> TREVAUGHN LATIMER: Good evening, everyone. Let's put our hands together for all the presenters.

(Applause.)

Good evening, my name is Trevaughn Latimer. I'm one of the co-presidents of the Black Cultural Center on campus. BCC for short. We're an organization on campus serving the black population by service, programming and community for our black students on campus. We have a lot of events coming up for Black History Month. There will be flyers around campus.

(Inaudible) for tonight, you will find that there are two discussion questions. I'm going to ask the first one, and then I'm going to give us five minutes to discuss it and then ask the second one. So I'll read the first one now.

What are some of the common threads that run through each of the faith traditions?

So whether those are the ones that were presented here or your own faith traditions (inaudible) following Dr. King's legacy.

So we'll give you five minutes to discuss it among the tables.

(Table discussions.)

>> TREVAUGHN LATIMER: For the next question -- all right, so for the next question, I'm going to ask you how will you incorporate your faith tradition into your personal and/or professional development?

(Table discussions.)

>> TREVAUGHN LATIMER: All right.

All right. Thank you all for your thoughtful interest to the discussion questions. The discussion will stop here. You can continue to discuss this throughout the night. Take it back home, talk to your friends, so you can keep these talks going. They're very important.

So that's the end of the program. Next we have a closing prayer by Father Thomas.

>> FR. THOMAS CHILLIKULAM: I'm sure we are an enriching community, wonderful evening. As we conclude, we shall pray together. And the prayer that we are going to use today is a prayer by Martin Luther King. We will make this prayer our own.

Let us pose in silence.

Let us pray. Oh, God, we thank you for the fact that you have inspired men and women in all nations and all cultures. We call you by different names. Some call you Allah. Some call you Elohim. Some call you Jahova. Some call you Brama. Some call you the unmoved (inaudible) but we know that these are all names for one and the same God. Grant that we follow you and become so committed to your way and your kingdom that we will be able to establish in our lives and in this world a brother and sisterhood, that we will be able to establish here a kingdom of understanding where men and women will live together as brothers and sisters, and respect the dignity and worth of every human being.

In the name and spirit of Jesus, amen.
DR. LISA REITER: Thank you for being a part of tonight's interfaith dinner dialogue. Please join us for other events in this week long celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's life and work. You can find these activities at luc.edu back slash MLK. And before you leave, please stop by the table to find out about our community service and action office.

Trevaughn has some more information for you. The BCC has a lot of activities coming up for Black History Month.

So again thank you all for coming here.

(Applause.)

There is more food so please help yourself to that. We would love for it to like disappear.

(Laughter.)

(End of event.)

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