



**Welcome Address to 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Leymah Gbowee
Reception, O'Sullivan Art Gallery
Public Address, St. John Francis Regis Chapel
March 14, 2015**

Paul (Alexander), Kate (Cumbo, Peace Jam)—thank you for the generous introduction. And thanks to all of you who have joined us this afternoon for this private reception and public talk by our wonderful guest, Leymah Gbowee.

I'm also pleased that we can have our reception in our O'Sullivan Art Gallery, so that we can enjoy the artwork of Jennifer Hope, which opened here this past week. I believe Jennifer is with us. She'll be giving an artist's lecture this coming Thursday.

For our generous donors and friends joining us this afternoon, again thanks for all that you do to make possible events like this Nobel Laureate lecture, along with the education that you inspire for our students and alumni, so that they can continue your example of making a difference in their communities around the world.

I'm also very grateful for the partnership between Regis University and Peace Jam, which has made possible the presence of so many wonderful Nobel Peace Laureates such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, and Rigoberto Menchu Tum over the years. Today we celebrate another such special guest to our campus who is making an impact on the world, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Leymah Gbowee. Leymah is visiting with two of her six children, her daughters, Nehcopee and Malou.

2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist, social worker and women's rights advocate.

She is Founder and President of the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa, based in Monrovia, the capital of the Republic of Liberia. The Foundation's vision is a peaceful and reconciled Africa that recognizes and utilizes the skills and talents of all, regardless of gender and ethnicity. GPFA Focuses its efforts by empowering women and youth-traditionally marginalized from meaningful decision-making roles-to fulfill leadership positions in their schools and communities. Leymah is best known for leading a nonviolent movement that brought together Christian and Muslim women to play a pivotal role in ending Liberia's devastating, fourteen-year civil war in 2003. This historic achievement paved the way for the election of Africa's first female head of state, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. It also marked the vanguard of a new wave of women



emerging worldwide as essential and uniquely effective participants in brokering lasting peace and security.

Leymah's story was told in the 2008 documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* and her 2011 memoir, *Mighty Be Our Powers* – and her lectures and discussions with groups large and small have engaged, inspired and motivated untold numbers of people worldwide.

She holds a M.A. in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, VA) and has been honored by universities around the world, including earning several honorary doctoral degrees.

As well as continuing her efforts toward peace and social change, she currently teaches at Columbia University's Barnard College in New York City.

Tonight we look forward to her inspiration and to her challenges for us, for as she has said, “You can never leave footprints that last if you are always walking on tiptoe”—and . . .

“You can tell people of the need to struggle, but when the powerless start to see that they really can make a difference, nothing can quench the fire.”

I am delighted to welcome Leymah to our Regis community.