

Florida-Georgia District Multicultural & Ethnic Diversity Commission

The Multicultural and Ethnic Commission of the Florida-Georgia District is pleased to be able to offer these resources for use with the midweek Lenten devotional or Sunday Service of Divine Liturgy in District congregations. Feel free to edit them as best fits your context. Please join us in prayer; “that the Lord will bless our efforts and desire to honor Him by helping one another come to grips with sin, express it in prayer, confess it, receive absolution, and amend our lives.”

We want to follow Your commandment to love one another, Father, and to honor the way that we are uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made in Your image. Help us, dear heavenly Father, as we celebrate the blood of Your Son Jesus Christ that unifies us, the blood that we share in the Eucharist, and the blood that manifests the oneness You desire and command. We ask it so in the name of Jesus! Amen.

(Prayers may be used at one service interspersed or on different weeks)

Prayer

Almighty God, Most Gracious and Loving Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiveness of sin and the power of the Holy Spirit in my life. Lord, increase my vision so that I see people as You see people, washed clean in the water of baptismal grace and covered in the blood of the sacrifice of Your Son Jesus Christ. Purify my heart, Father to love those You love without partiality. Heal the pain that people suffer because of racial slurs and be our Shelter in this storm of lawlessness, lies and hatred. Purify our hearts, Lord, heal the wounds caused by hatred, enmity, and strife and bless me with courage to be an emissary of Your love and favor. Move in our nation and world, Holy Jesus, so that we may live in the freedom You have won for us. Fill our hearts with Your love and peace. Grant us grace and abide with us that Your kingdom comes, and Your will is done in us, in our families, in our relationships and in our

world. Make it so, Lord, in the name of our Lord Jesus who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God both now and forever. Amen.

Prayer

God of all Mercy and Grace, we honor You, we love You and we strive to serve You in holiness and joy. You are the Loving and Kind Father who has set us free from the distractions, insults, fears, and temptations the enemy sends to distract us from serving You and Your people. You have delivered us, Father, from the lies and distortions that breed misunderstanding and fear that drive us apart rather than joining us together. You have brought us into the Kingdom of Your Son, Jesus our Savior. In His heavenly Kingdom there is no discrimination, hatred, enmity, and strife and we pray that Your Kingdom will come and will be done on earth as in heaven. Let Your Kingdom be manifest among us as Your people. Place in us a desire to be intentional about seeking opportunities to worship, study, and serve with our brothers and sisters of unfamiliar cultures and ethnicities. Grant us grace to live out Your prophetic unction that Your people be known on earth because everyone can see how we love one another despite the desire of the enemy to separate us through confusion and fear. You, Holy God, are One, and You have made us one by faith, through the blood of Your Son, Jesus, Our Savior who does live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, both now and forevermore. Amen.

Prayer

Almighty God, Most Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wonder of Your creation in which You fearfully and wonderfully make humankind with a variety of skin colors, hair textures, eye shapes, facial features, and distinct characteristics. You grant us the grace to form languages, cultures and traditions that reflect our values and that which

we find meaningful. Thank You for allowing each of us to pursue You in our distinctive ways and to honor You as we love and accept one another and value our differences. Forgive us when we fall short of love for You, reflected in our discrimination against one another. Renew us, gracious Father! Correct our fearful, errant thoughts regarding 'those people' as if we are not all one people created in Your image with the command to love one another as we have been loved. Do not allow the enemy to deceive us any longer but send Your Holy Spirit once again to transform and renew our minds so that we reflect Your love for us as we accept and love one another. We ask it confident of Your kind and generous forgiveness, mercy and grace, Father, because of the sacrifice of Your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, both now and forever. Amen.

Confession and Absolution

(Confess sin of fear, discrimination, hatred, prejudice)

(L=Leader, C=Congregation)

L: In the name of the Father, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit*.
Amen.

C: Almighty God, Most Gracious Heavenly Father, I confess that I have not honored You and Your creation in my life and relationships. I have fallen into the temptation of the enemy to fear others and have not defended my brothers and sisters. I have sometimes cooperated with the Evil One instead of resisting him and encouraging others to a life of holiness. I have not been courageous to speak out for fear of rejection. I have not defended Your people when others have spoken slurs and epithets in my hearing. I do deserve Your punishment. For the sake of Your Son Jesus, forgive my sin and grant me courage to stand for You and receive rejection with thanksgiving and praise.

(Pause for Reflection)

L: Upon this Your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, operating under His Lordship, declare your sin forgiven and encourage you to go forth in faith, courage and confidence to amend your sinful life, to seek ways to love and serve your neighbor, to advocate for the foreigner in our midst, and to put the best construction on every activity, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen. Lord make it so. Amen.

Responsive Confessional Litany

(L=Leader, R=Response)

L: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R: Amen.

L: The LORD our God is God of gods and Lord of lords,

R: The great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. Deuteronomy 10:27

L: We honor You, revere You, and obey Your commands.

R: Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.

L: Without holiness no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14

R: We honor all humankind as created in Your image, male and female, white and black, rich and poor.

L: We understand this, "Rich and poor have this in common" and we confess and practice,

- R: The Lord is the Maker of them all, for God does not show favoritism. Romans 2:11
- L: We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23
- R: But God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16
- L: Whoever believes? Europeans, Africans, Asians, Latinos, First Nation? Whoever believes?
- R: Yes. This is the confession of scripture and our confession as well, we will not fear, for the Lamb of God is worthy “to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9)
- L: We agree with the confession of Jesus, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
- R: Yes, we agree, we are all created by God, we are the people ransomed “from every tribe and language and people and nation,” we are all precious in His sight, we will not fear, we repent of showing partiality and will amend our sinful life.
- ALL: In Christ Jesus we are all children of God through faith, for all of us who have been baptized into Christ have clothed ourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We are all made with unique distinctions that glorify the image of our Creator God.

Because we belong to Christ, we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29

We are the family of God, and we will honor our Father by respecting His image in every man, woman, and child, regardless of ethnicity. We will defend the dignity of every person as a way of being holy and obedient unto our Father.

L: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

R: Make it so Lord in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord! Amen. Amen. Amen.