



January 2012
Peace Gathering Prayer Service
Theme: Civility in Discourse

Five Minutes before Service: Play some instrumental music that is peaceful and relaxing

Leader: Thank you for coming; Peace and all Good to everyone. As we gather, we will be reflecting and praying about the way we communicate with one another individually, and within our society. As we know, our brother Francis is recognized as an embodiment of peace. His constant greeting of peace and all good is a suggestion that our interactions with each other and the language we use with each other lay the foundation for our relationships.

Let us enter into our prayer and reflection that we will be ever mindful of the words we use while interacting with one another and our world. Let us begin by singing the refrain from the World Peace Prayer.

Opening Hymn: World Peace Prayer by Marty Haugen & Satish (See back page)

Readings from the World Scriptures:

Reader 1: From the Islamic Scriptures: Koran 39: 1-4
(pause for reflection)

Reader 2: From the Hebrew Scriptures: Proverbs 15:1-4
(pause for reflection)

Reader 3: From the Christian Scriptures: Ephesians 4: 29-32
(pause for the reflection)

Response: Sing Refrain :World Peace Prayer

Examples from Francis' lifestyle:

Reader 1: Francis used his language of peace especially in a most significant and effective way when engaged with people of power and authority. He appealed to a sense of faith and reconciliation in a



standoff between the mayor of Assisi and Bishop Guido. The bishop excommunicated the mayor for promoting alliances in a war with Perugia. At the recitation of the Canticle of the Creatures, the mayor was moved to forgive the bishop and the bishop apologized in a gesture of reconciliation.

(pause for reflection)

Reader 2: In his “Letter to Rulers of the People”, Francis calls leaders to faith and integrity and asks them to promote faith among the people.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of the language of Francis and promoting peace is his encounter with the Sultan. Francis and the Sultan were engaged in an experience and exchange of mutual respect in the atmosphere of different cultures, different faiths, and different worldviews of a people at war with each other.

(pause for reflection)

Response: Sing refrain: World Peace Prayer

Personal Reflection:

When I speak

- 1) Is it the truth?
- 2) Is it fair to all concerned?
- 3) Will it build good will and better friendships?
- 4) Will it be beneficial to all concerned?



Two well remembered sayings are :

“If you can’t say anything nice, do not say anything at all,”

and the Golden Rule:

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

These sayings do not change the differences between opposing sides, but what

they do is bring respect, dignity, integrity, and civility to the dialogue.

Communal response and/or discussion in twos.

Prayer Response:

Leader: That we are able to respect the dignity of all people including the dignity of those who hold an opposing view.

All: **We pray for peace and all good.**

That we use terms or a vocabulary of faith to unite or reconcile, rather than divide.

We pray for peace and all good.

That we recognize that dialogue and engagement can lead to new insight and mutual understanding.

We pray for peace and all good.

That policy makers in our churches, temples, mosques, country, cities, and world are called to their sense of integrity and respect when speaking with each other.

We pray for peace and all good.

That we are blessed and graced with the posture and attitude of “staying at the table” in our conversations and discussions.

We pray for peace and all good.

Action Response:

Leader: At this time, we invite you to read over the 2012 Peacemaking Pledge, this year on Civility in Discourse. If you would like to join us in exploring how to be more gracious with others, especially those whose attitudes and beliefs may differ from our own, please go up to the table and sign the pledge. We ask that you take the pledge sheet home with you after the service and reflect on it each month.

Closing Song: “This is My Song” (See back page)

This prayer service was adapted from the Peacemaking section on the Franciscan Action Network’s website, www.franciscanaction.org

2012 Peacemaker Pledge A Call to Civility in Discourse

“Let the brothers and sisters be mild, peaceful and unassuming, gentle and humble, speaking honestly to all in accord with their vocation. Wherever they are, or wherever they go throughout the world they should not be quarrelsome, contentious, or judgmental towards others. Rather, it should be obvious that they are joyful, good-humored, and happy in the Lord as they ought to be. ... (TOR #20)

As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. No one should be roused to anger or insult on their account; rather, all should be moved to peace, kindness and harmony because of their gentleness. ... (TOR #30)

Acknowledging the fear, mistrust and hatred we find around us, personally, nationally and globally, and

Acknowledging our call as Franciscans to be messengers of peace,

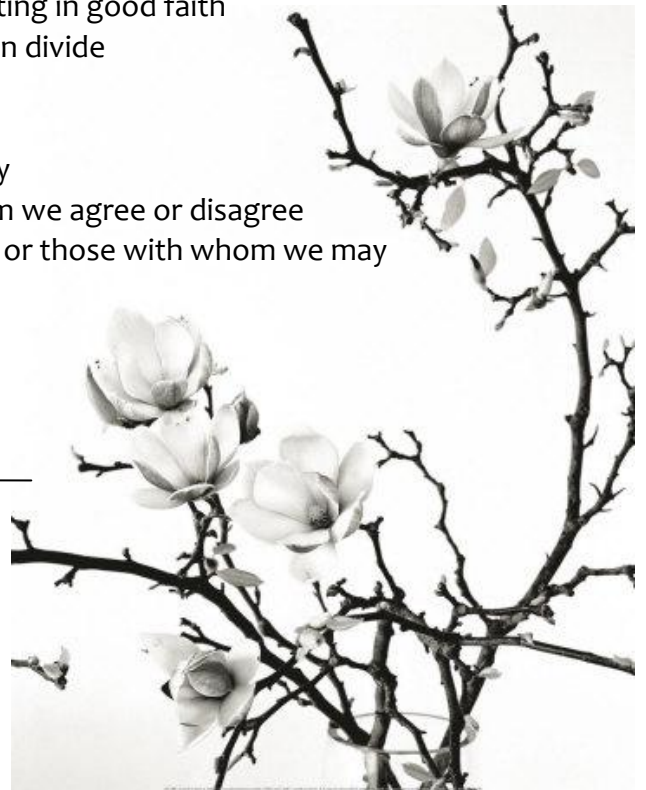
Therefore, I commit myself to

- Respect the dignity of all people, especially the dignity of those who hold an opposing view
- Identify common ground such as similar values or concerns and utilize this as a foundation to build upon
- Listen closely to others; try to understand other points of view
- Presume that those with whom we differ are acting in good faith
- Find words/ways to unite or reconcile rather than divide
- Take responsibility for mistakes
- Apologize sincerely
- Call policymakers to a sense of personal integrity
- Pray for our political leaders — those with whom we agree or disagree
- Pray for each other, those with whom we agree or those with whom we may disagree

Name

Date

Please keep this pledge in your prayer space. You may want to review it monthly, to check your progress on living peaceably with others.



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READING 1: From the Islamic Scriptures (Koran 39:1-4)

Respectful behavior to the Leader, in manner, voice, and demeanor are the bonds and cement of an organized community. The whispers of rumor should be tested, and selfish impatience should be curbed to discipline. All quarrels should be composed, if necessary by the force of the community, but with perfect fairness and justice. Ridicule, taunts, and biting words, should be avoided, in presence or in absence. Suspicion and spying are unworthy of men who believe.

(Pause for reflection)

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Reading II from the Hebrew Scriptures (Proverbs 15: 1-4)

A mild answer turns away wrath,
sharp words stir up anger.

The tongue of wise persons distills knowledge.
the mouth of fools spews folly.

The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere:
observing the evil and the good.

The tongue that soothes is a tree of life;
the barbed tongue, a breaker of hearts.

(Pause for reflection)

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Reading III from the Christian Scriptures (Ephesians 4:29-32)

Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, otherwise you will only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.

(Pause for reflection)