

## CHAPTER 1 PRAYER SERVICE

**All:** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Reader:** A reading from the book of Genesis.

God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.

And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made and found it very good. The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Reader:** An excerpt from Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that “he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity.” To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennoble each human being. . . . To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds. . . . Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.

**Leader:** God and father of us all, remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Reader:** When we meet someone who looks or lives differently from us . . .

**All:** Remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Reader:** When we encounter hateful speech and actions . . .

**All:** Remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Reader:** When we disagree with a friend or stranger . . .

**All:** Remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Reader:** When we are misunderstood or despised . . .

**All:** Remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Reader:** When we doubt our own goodness and your infinite love for us . . .

**All:** Remind us that we are all created in your image and likeness.

**Leader:** Our human dignity is both a great gift and a great responsibility. It calls us to care for each other in deep and meaningful ways, no matter how different we may be. Let us pray for the grace to answer this call by recognizing and protecting the dignity of all human beings.

**Group 1:** God of all life, help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.

**Group 2:** Help us to recognize you in all whom you have created: children not yet born, families affected by poverty and war, people of different abilities, people from other lands, and all who are victims of hatred and racism.

**Group 3:** Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you have created, regardless of stage of life, or wealth, or ability, or color, or creed, for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.

**Group 4:** Share with us your holy knowledge that we are all your children, each bestowed with inherent dignity. May your justice reign forever! Amen.

**All:** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.