



“Let Justice Roll On Like A River...”

*Day of Prayer for JustPeace in the Philippines
September 2024*

Decoration: Either tacked to the front wall or suspended from the ceiling is a large cut-out cardboard dove. Other than the dove, the stage/altar is bare. Participants are given strips of ribbon wide and long enough for them to write a phrase or sentence. Have pentel pens available. Assign participants as readers for the responsive reading)

PRELUDE

During the Prelude, you are requested to reflect on this question: What, do you think, is God's reaction upon seeing the situation of our world today?

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Lord calls us!

People: We have come today. Isn't that obedience to God's call ?

Leader: The Lord calls us!

People: We will pray and give our offerings today. Isn't that obedience to God's call?

Leader: The Lord says: "I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:21- 24)

People: Lord, purge me of my prejudices, my narrow-mindedness, my dogmatism. Lift from my mind the preconceptions that have coated my understanding of human rights. And just this once, Lord, let me be open to what others are saying. It is going to be painful and threatening but allow me to encounter you in the strangeness of your Word.

INVOCATION

By your word Lord God, you set free everyone imprisoned in himself/herself. In freedom you have called us to become men and women in the image and the spirit of Jesus Christ. Creator God, give us the strength that the life of Jesus has first provided and the openness that he has prepared for us. Make us receptive and free so that with you, we may live for this world. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

(Please rise)

God of Ages

Author: Winfred E. Garrison

(Tune: Praise to the Lord, The Almighty)

God of the ages, the strength of our people and nation,
Gladly we come to Thy presence with true adoration,
Seeking Thy face, Trusting Thy love and Thy grace,
Thou art our health and salvation.

God of all mercy, for pardon and peace we implore Thee,
Humbly confessing our faults and our failures before Thee.
Children of men, Falling and rising again.
Still give us grace to adore Thee.

God of the poor and the weak, to our prayer now attending,
Teach us to follow the Master of all men in blending
Worship with deed. Praises with service to need,
All men in God's name befriending.

God of all people, let justice and peace like a river.
Flow through the world until all-in-one common endeavor,
Build among men brotherhood's kingdom and then
Thine be the glory forever.

RESPONSIVE READING*

Reader 1: I am a student, lonely, and missing those who care! Haunted by unfinished requirements, burdened by unpleasant relationships, paralyzed by irrelevant teachings, suffocated by restrictions! Will I ever experience God's presence?

People: And the World was made flesh and dwelt among us. Let us then hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we have a Lord that sympathizes with our weakness.

Reader 2: I am one of the poor and hungry. Pitied, studied, aided, and neglected. Some console us by saying that God must have loved us so much that God made so many of us! blessed are you, poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Will I know what poverty really means?

People: Jesus says "The BLIND can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the good news is preached to the poor. How happy are those who have no doubts about me."

Reader 3: I am a worker. Day in and day out I offer myself so that my family will live. Victimized by those who decide for my future; taken advantage of, weakened by hard labour yet I go on for I have to. Often, I feel I am no longer that creature in God's image but a machine, a tool! Will I ever become a living being again?

People: Those who trust in the Lord for help will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

Reader 4: I am a farmer. My back is stiff and painful from pushing the plow and carrying the heavy pesticide sprayer. My eyes show the emptiness of ages - the luster and the sparkle was gone. My feet are caked with mud just as my whole body is buried in debt. Must I go on bearing this heavy burden?

People: Jesus says: "Come unto me all who are weary and are heavily laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart...for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

CONFESSION

Leader: Let us open ourselves to the God who sees our pain and hears our cry. Let us recognize our weaknesses and failure to live up to the high calling for which we have been called.

People: O Great and Gracious God, we come before you today as a humbled people. Our hearts are heavy with the burden of our participation in the hostilities and pain that are far too common in this world you have given us. We know that there is suffering close to us, next to us, and within us, and we know that too often we do not act in ways worthy of your children to heal this suffering. Forgive us. Creating God. Proclaim your Good News within our hearts so that we might embrace your call to life. And unbend our willful ways so that we might become healers in this broken world. Be with us for we are your children

and the work of your hands. This we ask that all Creation might thrive and that we might find favor in your sight. Amen.

Minister or facilitator: Because you have sincerely confessed your weaknesses and failures, our God is faithful and just to forgive us and create in us the desire to be more sensitive to the cries around us, to be more willing to give ourselves, to live lives worthy of our redemption. Go as forgiven children of God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 22:13-16

New Testament Reading: John 10:7-14

HOMILY

Please refer to the brief backgrounder on the Day of Prayer for JustPeace in the Philippines for context.

OFFERING

Offertory Sentence: Micah 6:6-8

(Whenever appropriate, after the offertory sentence, have certain congregants bring to the altar objects that represent the poor: rice stalks for the farmers, a tool for the workers, a net/fishing rod for the fisherfolk, an empty cooking pot for the urban poor, etc. All the other congregants/parishioners bring their money offering to the altar.)

SPECIAL MUSICAL MEDITATION

(either vocal or instrumental)

AFFIRMATION OF OUR DISCIPLESHIP

Leader: We are called to proclaim the truth. Let us together this day proclaim the truth about human worth and dignity. And let us believe. It is not true that this world and its people are doomed to die and to be lost.

People: This is true, there is future for the children of today.

Leader: It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction.

People: This is true, the Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces and will remove disgrace of people from all the earth.

Leader: It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word and that war and destruction have come to stay forever.

People: This is true, the Lord foils the plans of the nations and thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of the heart of the Lord through all generations.

All: So let us dream, let us prophesy, let us see visions of love. And Let us seek peace and justice with humility, with joy and faith, with courage.

HYMN OF CHALLENGE

(The liturgist is free to choose an appropriate hymn. While the hymn is being sung, the congregants are requested to write brief messages on upholding peace and human rights on the ribbons given to them earlier. They are invited to come to the altar to tape the ribbon on the cardboard dove. Be sure taping materials are available. They return to their seats.)

BENEDICTION

(Please rise)

Minister: People of God, now go recognizing that the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Let each one of us commit ourselves to the defense of human dignity in the name of the God who creates... Jesus who liberates...and the Holy Spirit who unites. Amen.

POSTLUDE

By: REV. DR. SHARON ROSE JOY RUIZ-DUREMDES

General Secretary (2000-2007)

National Council of Churches in the Philippines