



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

3rd Sunday of Advent: Advent of JOY HUMAN RIGHTS SUNDAY

"The Gospel is pointing to the attainment of national independence and sovereignty. It is where citizens could exercise freedom and have the power to overcome poverty, powerlessness, and unjust social structure. It is where human rights, justice, peace and development are assured equally for all."
- Mariano C. Apilado

MEDITATION (sounds of chaos and cries of lament in the background...)

OPENING RESPONSES

Reader 1: "Our school is a place for learning, not a war zone. All we want is freedom of education!"

Voice/s of the Lumad: **We claim our RIGHT to education! Stop impunity! Stop Lumad killings!**

People: We want peace in our communities, not militarization!

Reader 2: Because of limited opportunities for work, and A very low level of compensation in our country, we are forced to toil hard in foreign lands exposing ourselves to danger and abuse bearing the pain of loneliness from being separated from loved-ones, and uprooted from our homeland just so we could give our families a comfortable life that we all deserve.

Voice/s of the OFW: **We claim our RIGHT to decent living and equal opportunities in our homeland! Increase basic wages of ordinary workers!**

People: We plead for peace that comes from our government's concern for the welfare of the common people, not neglect and exploitation!

Reader 3: We want to live peacefully in the land we inherited from our foreparents, without the disturbance from strangers who want to drive us away so they could, in their selfishness and greed, exploit and destroy our natural resources.

Voice of the Indigenous Peoples: **We claim our RIGHT to our ancestral domain! Protect our land. Stop large-scale mining!**

People: "Tambuli Tu Kalinow, Paneytow Tu Kahusoy. We call for Peace, we search for justice!"

ALL: God of Peace, we pray for peace and justice to come and reign in our broken and desperate world!

SONG OF CONFESSION

"If the War Goes On"

Text by John Bell & Graham Maule; Music by John Bell

If the war goes on and the children die of hunger, and the old men weep, for the young men are no more, and the women learn how to dance without a partner, who will keep the score?

If the war goes on and the truth is taken hostage, and new terrors lead to the need to euphemize; When the calls for peace are declared unpatriotic who'll expose the lies?

If the war goes on and the daily bread is terror, and the voiceless poor take the road as refugees;
When a nation's pride destines millions to be homeless, who will heed their pleas?

If the war goes on and the rich increase their fortunes, and the arms sales soar as new weapons are
displayed; when a fertile field turns to no-man's land tomorrow, who'll approve such trade?

If the war goes on, will we close the doors to heaven?

If the war goes on, will we breach the gates of hell?

If the war goes on, will we ever be forgotten? If the war goes on...

MOMENT OF SILENCE (*soft background music...*)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON

Minister: "If my people who are called by my Name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My
face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin
and heal their land." (*II Chronicles 7:14*)

LIGHTING OF THE 3rd ADVENT CANDLE "The Candle of Joy"

Liturgist: We light the candle of joy....

People: We, God's children, humble ourselves and pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked
ways. As we light this candle, we who Heaven has heard and forgiven and who await the
Lord of Light, turn our lament into songs of JOY!

† SONG OF AFFIRMATION AND CELEBRATION "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; let people sing for joy
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found.

† CALL TO CELEBRATION

Liturgist: And God created the heavens and the earth,

People: And gave them to us to use and enjoy.

Liturgist: And God gave life into each of us and set us upon the earth,

People: And God sent Jesus Christ to save us from the pull of death!

Liturgist: Everything that fills our souls with gladness and light is a gift from the loving Creator.

**People: We have been entrusted with unfathomable riches. For all these, our God is
to be praised.**

All: Let us be joyful and worship God together!

† PRAYER

Lord God, friend of those in need, your Son Jesus has untied our burdens and healed our spirits. We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened, those seeking healing, those in need within the church and the world. Hear our prayers that we may love you with our whole being and praise and willingly share the concerns of our neighbor. Amen.

† SCRIPTURE LESSON

MESSAGE/SERMON

THE GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERING

† CLOSING HYMN

□ "The Hands of God" □

HFJ# 295

† PRAYER

Liturgist: May your LOVE strengthen our hands, so that we may use them to build bridges, not walls.

People: May your LOVE surround our hearts, so that we will love each other and all creation.

Liturgist: May your LOVE support our spirits, so that we are never afraid to proclaim and live the gospel.

People: And may your LOVE sustain our lives, so that our thoughts and actions this day will bring peace to our world.

All: We pray with assurance that you are the one who abides in us, and in whom we abide. Amen.

† BENEDICTION

Minister: We go forth in the LOVE of the God who calls us to be, who challenges us to dream, and who empowers us to act. Amen!

† RESPONSE

"Trees of the Fields"

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field
Will clap, will clap their hands, and all the trees of the field
Will clap their hands!
The trees of the field will clap their hands
The trees of the field will clap their hands
While you go out with joy!
