

## **Liturgical Materials Used for Worship Services with Migrant Workers**

*Litanies and prayers used on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the migrant workers ministry in the PROK's Kang Nam Church on October 23, 2005.*

### **CALL TO CELEBRATE**

*Minister 1:* Today is the eighth year anniversary celebration of the community of migrant workers in this local church.

*People:* On this momentous occasion we remember the days and years of the life of a people adopted into the Korean Christian community which opened itself to the needs of times.

*Minister 2:* For eight years migrant workers come and go, yet the unwavering faith of those who are around has been sustained by the empowering presence of the Spirit, the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ, the Includer of all peoples.

*People:* Undoubtedly, there were ups and downs in our life as a community, and these always challenge us to act together in overcoming our fears, in celebrating every transition and in pursuing our goals for abundant life not only for our selves, but for all.

*(After the first three candles are lit)*

*Acolyte 1:* I have lighted the first three anniversary candles signifying the first three years of the local church ministry with the foreign workers —the trying but hopeful times of the evolving migrant community.

*Response Chant:* Kindle a flame to lighten the dark  
And take all fear away.

*(After the fourth to the sixth candles are lit)*

*Acolyte 2:* I have lighted the fourth, fifth and sixth candles signifying the next three years of our existence as community --- the time of massive registration of migrant workers, sadly, followed by government's mandatory departure and assurance of re-entry, which resulted to the going home of many.

*Response Chant:* Kindle a flame to lighten the dark  
And take all fear away.

*(After the seventh and the eighth candles are lit)*

*Acolyte 3:* I have lighted the seventh and the eighth candles signifying the distressed times of saying 'goodbyes' to all who went home forcibly due to the on-going and intensified crackdown of undocumented workers and those who left voluntarily. This is also a happy time of giving our warm "welcomes" to all who

newly come and feel the joy of companionship, of being part or members of this inclusive faith community.

Keep the fire of faith, hope and love burning! Let us tarry on!

*Response Chant:*       Kindle a flame to lighten the dark  
                                  And take all fear away.

### **A CALL TO RECKON**

*Migrant 1:*       In so many ways fear has traumatized us. This is a kind of fear that haunts us both in our waking and sleeping —the fear of arrest, detention and eventual deportation. We fear of losing our jobs and leave our families disgruntled, fragmented and alienated. We tell ourselves that if there is any other choice of staying in our own country, we may be spared from this fear and anxiety. So teach us, O God to name our fears, so we may be able to overcome them, with you being our Comforter and Guide.

*Migrant 2:*       God, we continue to live and work within the context of globalization that has not actually benefited the largest and the poorest segments of our world's population, doesn't bridged the gap between wealth and labour, between rich and poor, and between industrialized and developing countries. We are your people in diaspora (migration). In one way or another, we have participated in the lengthening of the evil days in our world. It is time to reckon! It's time to feel sorry and turn away from worshipping the idols of globalization which cause us to sin against you and humanity. So, help your church, O God in its important role in humanizing globalization, and forgive us our sins .....

### **A MOTHER'S PRAYER**

by Juliet Tudence

Mothers' Day, May 23, 2005

*Juliet Tudence is a woman migrant worker in South Korea. She left behind her family in the Philippines to earn enough to send her children to school and give them a better future.*

Heavenly Mother-Father God:  
We thank you for all the blessings that you have given to us.  
Thank you for your guidance and protection  
We feel completely secure because you are with us,  
Bless each and every one of us today  
While we celebrate mothers and mothering  
and children of their childhood,  
We implore you to bless all mothers for their encounters with pain and sacrifices  
for the sake of their children

Lead them O God, on the right path and never let them depart from you.  
May the sacrifices of all mothers bear good and lasting fruits.  
Watch over all children, O God,  
Especially those whose mothers left them for jobs abroad  
for their sake and their future.  
Let their homes be safe and secured places for growing up.

Watch over us, mothers and fathers who are away from home  
We pray for family reunions,  
when we can touch and talk with our children and family members  
and enjoy the graces that you have given to us.  
Bless and keep all mothers in your care.  
Remind us always of our true home.

O God, bless our families in the Philippines  
as well as the families of our brothers and sisters in Korea.  
Protect us from all dangers while we are here in Korea;  
To do the work which you have given us.  
Shelter us and bring us back safely to our families  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **PROSE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS**

By Frank J. Hernando

*Note: The paragraph in italics are personal reflections of the writer, while those that are not are part of the contents of the statement he wrote against the ongoing clampdown on migrant workers for KASAMMAKO, an federation of Filipino migrant workers in South Korea.*

Currently, thousands of undocumented migrant workers around the country were arrested and consequently deported to their home countries.

*A text message in my cell phone says:*

*“Immigration police is around Songsu, 2 Nepalese 9 Filipinos arrested. Be careful!”*

*A migrant worker told me his story:*

*“Our factory was raided by the immigration police few days ago and several of my co-workers were nabbed, detained and deported. I was spared from arrest because I climbed a window and hid behind a stiff wall. I was terrified! But I have no choice. Somehow if I fell from the window, I’m a dead meat.”*

The Ministry of Justice and its Immigration Department cited legal and judicial bases for conducting the clampdown. One of this is that they justify their action against overstaying migrant workers by pointing out the legal process of getting employment in South Korea namely the Industrial Trainee System and the Employment Permit System (EPS).

*An officer from the Philippine Embassy once said:*

*“Migrant workers should try their best to stay legal in South Korea.” He meant what he said because of the lack of employment in the Philippines, regardless of the working conditions in the host country, migrant workers have to endure the strain and stress of the 3D (difficult, dirty, dangerous) jobs they have so as to stay legally in South Korea. It hurts me deep in my heart to hear this manner of talking and the sad reality in my home country.*

Another reason is that there has been no other way to curb the increase of overstaying migrant workers, but crackdown. This means that regardless of the causes why individual migrant workers continue to stay in the country even without a visa is not investigated or heard.

Mass deportation, even if it is against United Nation’s International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and the International Labour Organization’s Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, is the ultimate solution to the many contradictions that underlie labour practices in South Korea.

*“Are there alternative ways of structuring labour?” I continue to ask this question to myself because it seems that migrant workers have no choice but to sell their labour as the only means to survive, and not really to have a life.*

Furthermore, the unwritten principles of neo-liberal economic globalization are the underlying reasons for the mass arrest, detention and deportation of undocumented migrant workers. Simply understood, these principles govern the means and ends of industrial production such as the concept of “outsourcing of labour”, “maximum profitability”, and “competitiveness”. In ensuring market competitiveness, factory owners have to get the cheapest labour as much as possible so as to get maximum profit for their products. By instituting a clampdown policy on migrant workers, labour outsourcing from developing countries such as the Philippines becomes a very convenient way to exploit cheap labour. As a result undocumented migrant workers who fear arrest and deportation suffer discrimination such as low wages, no medical insurance, no pension benefits, long working hours, abuse—verbal, sexual and physical and many more.

*I asked a young migrant worker if he is an EPS worker and he said, “I have passed the line of EPS.” He was saying that he came to Korea as a worker under EPS but now he is undocumented. He was trying to hide his chagrin but I can see it his face. There are means of legalizing “undocumented” or “illegal” migrant workers. In fact in terms of their work output in the factories, there is no such thing as legal or illegal. All migrant workers contribute to the wealth of the nation and of the world. Workers should be considered as co-stewards of resources and all of life.*

Undeniably, the Employment Permit System (EPS) since its implementation in August 2004, a year after its enactment has been proven ineffective in preventing the increase of undocumented migrant workers. The South Korean government has failed to address the insidious issues on migrant labour. The Amnesty International on its 2006 annual report on

Human Rights Situation of Migrant Workers in South Korea cited that the EPS has not solved the problem of overstaying migrant workers:

...Once in Korea, many (migrant workers) find that their jobs are very different from those were promise and are more dangerous or more poorly paid than they had ever expected. With few rights to negotiate a change of job, many end up giving up their legal employment and going to work as undocumented or irregular migrant workers elsewhere in the country. ...Under the EPS system, migrant workers, in practice, have very limited scope for changing their workplace. This can hamper seriously their ability to lodge complaints about abuses because they fear antagonizing their employers or they fear losing their job and thereby losing legal status to in South Korea (AI 2006 Report p. 3-4).

*With these, I deplore the unabated clampdown on migrant workers which violates our fundamental rights as enshrined in the international treaties ratified or subscribed to by the South Korean government. On top of my voice, alongside all the migrant workers call on the South Korean government to STOP CRACKDOWN! Respect migrant workers rights, because they have the right to:*

- Life;
- Freedom from torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Freedom from slavery or servitude;
- Freedom from imprisonment for inability to fulfill contractual obligation;
- Recognition as a person before the law;
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- Best attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- Education;
- Adequate housing;
- Adequate food and water;
- Work and rights at work.

*I believe that all migrant workers should unite, be organized and raise their voices and together act against the violation of their rights and welfare.*