



NCCP MIGRANTS SUNDAY 2026

WORSHIP LITURGY GUIDE

**“ PROTECT THE LIVES
AND WELFARE OF
OFWS, AND MIGRANTS
AFFECTED BY WAR
AND CONFLICT”**

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES
MIGRANTE INTERNATIONAL
CHURCHES WITNESSING WITH MIGRANTS

**“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by
so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels
without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2**

NCCP MIGRANT SUNDAY 2026

(For those who are able, please rise when you see this symbol “†”)

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: We are gathered for worship today in the name of God, who takes care of every creature as our parent;

People: Who in Jesus Christ is on the side of the weak and those who are treated without justice;

Leader: Who in His Holy Spirit gives us the capacity to give solidarity to those who suffer and the power to resist all that threatens and destroys life.

People: We believe that our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth, for that we bless His name forever.

ALL: Be blessed, His name forever. AMEN

† OPENING HYMN/SONG:

SEND THE LIGHT

(in solidarity with migrant workers' adaptation)

There's a call comes ringing o'er the distant way:
"Send the light! Send the light!"
There are hands to hold up, there are lives to weigh.
Send the light! Send the light!

Refrain

Send the light, the blessed justice light.
Let it shine from shore to shore.
Send the light, the blessed welcome light.
Let it shine forevermore.

We have heard the call of neighbors far away:
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And a pledge of hope at ev'ry door we lay,
Send the light! Send the light! (Refrain)

Let us pray that care may ev'rywhere abound;
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And a kinship spirit ev'rywhere be found.
Send the light! Send the light! (Refrain)

Let us not grow weary in the work of care.
"Send the light! Send the light!"
Let us build a home for all beyond compare.
Send the light! Send the light! (Refrain)

PRAYER FOR FILIPINO MIGRANTS:

O God of life, of history, and of a hopeful future, we come before You with humble hearts, lifting up all Filipino migrants around the world, especially those impacted by the ongoing US-Israel war against Iran.

Each day, countless Filipinos leave their homeland seeking better opportunities and fair wages. Despite the uncertainties, the challenges of difficult work, and the pain of separation from loved ones, they carry with them courage and dreams for their families.

We earnestly pray for their protection and safety. Shield them from human trafficking, exploitation, corruption, and all forms of harm.

We also pray and remember their families, especially their children. In Your boundless compassion, enfold them in Your love, care, and provision until they may be reunited with their migrant kin.

Lord, grant wisdom and righteous leadership to our government. May they reconsider and ultimately end the labor export policies that separate families and expose migrants to risks abroad.

Instead, inspire initiatives that create dignified jobs here at home with fair wages.

Give us wisdom and courage to stand firm and advocate for the rights and well-being of all migrants.

At this moment, we lift all civilians, victims of violence, displaced families, and migrant Filipino workers affected by this unjust war in the Middle East. We know this violence is

not Your will, and so we pray for peace and an end to the conflict.

We ask all these things through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever. **AMEN.**

† CONFESSION OF FAITH

People (right side): I believe in God, who made all peoples of one blood,
Who calls every land our home and every person our kin.
I believe in Jesus Christ, who was born a refugee,
Who fled oppression, labored with his hands, and welcomed the stranger.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, who unites us across borders and languages,
Who stirs our hearts to seek justice and embrace all as neighbors.

People (left side): I acknowledge that migrant workers bear the weight of our world with their labor, that they build our homes, grow our food, and sustain our communities.
I confess that we have too often looked away when they are exploited,
Spoken of them as "other" instead of "one of us,"
And allowed systems to keep them from their loved ones and their rights.

All: I affirm that every migrant worker is made in God's image,
Deserving of fair pay, safe work, and dignity without limit.
I pledge to see Christ in their faces, to speak for their cause,
To welcome them with open arms and open hearts,

And to work for a world where no one must leave home to survive.

This is my faith. This is my promise. **AMEN.**

READINGS FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Exodus 22:21

"You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

† **Matthew 25:35-36**

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

Bible Reader: The word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

REMEMBERING EGYPT: GOD'S CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

By Ms. Rebecca Lawson, PCPR

Collective Memory

Exodus 22:21 could be viewed as a straight-forward instruction from a list codes for good behavior: "**You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress them...**" A deeper look, however, uncovers a motivation or a logic behind why sojourners must be treated with respect: "**...for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.**"

God makes clear that sojourners — that is foreigners, migrants, or those passing through (non-nationals) — are not to be wronged or oppressed, **because the Children of God had also known a life of oppression in a foreign land.**

Collective memory of forced migration, of being lesser in status as captives or servant-people, is a foundation for WHY migrants and foreigners should be treated kindly. The experience of past suffering informed correct behavior.

For Philippine Churches, this should be a potent catalyst in framing our Migrant Ministries. What should be our current conduct and right behavior? Let us consider three urgent tasks for our Migrant Ministries.

*****Hospitality for Returning Home**

Filipinos are well known for hospitality — some may say, Filipinos are too hospitable. After centuries of colonial oppression, the Philippines is still easily affected by the influences of foreign powers. Even more, the Philippines has many *kababayan sa diaspora*, basically Filipinos are spread in every country of the world. MANY Filipinos long and pray to return HOME.

As Philippine Churches, how can we better invite them to come home, to welcome them in coming home?

Migrant advocates in the Philippines have noticed a gap in

Filipino hospitality. When a foreigner arrives, receptions and help are offered and a warm welcome greets them. People are interested in getting to know them. But when Filipino migrants return home, do Churches step forward with similar hospitality?

Sadly, we usually don't.

Some returning migrants reported that, upon arrival, they were immediately asked to donate to the Church. Even worse, migrants returning from an experience where their rights were violated have even reported feeling neglected or ignored, upon their arrival. At a moment when they most needed hospitality and welcome from the Church, they instead felt isolation or even shame for their situation.

This should be a wake up call: how will we strengthen our ministry of welcome for returning Filipino migrants? What skills do we need to develop to better care for those who have been abused by their employers, exploited by traffickers, deported by foreign governments, or left without means or opportunities upon returning home from foreign lands? How can we be a light of welcome and a warm fire of homecoming and belonging?

*****Witnessing with 'God's Children on the Move'**

The Church may be helped by understanding the situation of migrant workers and their plight as GOD'S CHILDREN ON THE MOVE! They are people on a journey with motivations,

dreams, and desires. They are searching for a better life. Even as they seek greener pastures, many have been forced to look for work abroad, since they could not find adequate livelihood in the Philippines.

As such, most never stop hoping to return to where they remember... to where they belong... to their homeland... and to their families and their communities.

Treated like second-class citizens with lesser value/respect and frequently deprived of access to the same basic services and privileges as nationals, the Egypt experience of the Israelites is not much different from many Overseas Filipino Workers today.

In many countries and circumstances, they are not fully accepted. They live with one foot — or, perhaps more aptly, with their hearts — in the Motherland, no matter how far they travel from home.

And they are many: 8,000+ Filipinos leave the country every day as temporary migrant workers (2025) or approximate 3million per year.

And each has a particular story. Here are just three highlights:

1. In 2025, more than 200 migrants were repatriated from Cambodia, where they have been trafficked to scam hubs. Many young men and women who thought they were wise

and tech savvy were transited through other country and then brought to Cambodia to work in online scams. Many shared how ashamed they felt that they were forced to scam and even recruit other Filipinos.

2. In 2025, the US crackdown on migrants also led to the deportation at least 183 seafarers and 150 land-based Filipinos. Others were detained.

3. The February 28, 2026 US-Israel bombing of Iran has spread to Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East, causing great distress among Filipino migrants workers. This distress is not only about the bombings, but also on worries of what will happen Filipino migrants are forced to return to the Philippines, where they have no means to sustain the needs of their families.

Philippine Churches are especially placed to develop ministries that help Filipino migrants and migrant workers from other economically poor countries and contexts from where refugees are fleeing. As the Church, we can easily connect with partners in different countries. Philippine Churches can even send missionaries to help develop migrant and solidarity ministries with partner Churches.

Through **Churches Witnessing With Migrants**, we have been able to walk beside migrants. In a common commitment from *sending* and *receiving* countries, Church people have been able to develop shared ministries with people of faith in various countries.

Perhaps, we need to further strengthen our LDR with Filipino migrants: our LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS, but also efforts to become Churches that **Listen**, **D**iscern, and **R**espond to the needs of migrants!

As Churches, we must strive for LDR²: **Long-Distance Relationships** that **Listen**, **D**iscern and **R**espond to our members, no matter how far they travel from home. We can continue to be the Church to our migrant members by staying in touch with them, educating them on their rights, providing pastoral and other forms of support for families left behind, and helping migrant workers to connect with a Church home in the country where they are working.

Through **Churches Witnessing With Migrants**, we can also rescue trafficked and abused migrants and provide support to migrants in distress. Through migrant ministries that welcome all migrants, we can bring services in dynamic and culturally responsive ways.

Even more, by prioritizing the participation of migrants through an ethos of “*nothing about migrants without the participation of migrants*,” **Churches Witnessing With Migrants** has become a vibrant platform for sharing ideas, encouraging initiatives, and nurturing meaningful campaigns, services, and policy advocacy that are migrant-informed and migrant-led.

The journey of migrants as 'God's Children on the Move' becomes one of hospitality and respect for sojourners in various contexts, respecting that anyone should be welcomed in any country. Even more, it calls us as Church people to advocate for jobs and development in the Philippines that will allow for Filipino migrants to return home.

*****Persistence in Acting for the Common Good**

Finally, we must not forget our calling to see in migrants the face of Jesus. As we minister to their needs, welcome them, and care for them always, we must be prepared to persist in our solidarity. Our journey with migrants is a long and often challenging effort to bring a LIGHT of Hope and the LOVE of God to even the dimmest and dismal of circumstances.

In 1995, the **National Council of the Philippines** established **Migrant Sunday** after the execution of Flor Contemplacion. Flor was a Filipina maid, falsely convicted of murder in Singapore. But even today, similar stories continue.

One example is Mary Jane Veloso. Mary Jane was illegally recruited with a promise of working as a domestic helper in Malaysia. When she got to Malaysia, she was duped into unknowingly carrying a suitcase lined with drugs. Arrested in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Mary Jane was sentenced to death by firing squad in 2010. She was spared from imminent execution in 2015. She was returned to the Philippines in

2024. But, she is still imprisoned in Manila. After all these years, we are still advocating for her unconditional release from detention. Our campaign for Mary Jane's freedom as a victim of human-trafficking continues.

We must prepare our hearts for long and intensive work ahead. The problems before us are complex, extensive, and deep-rooted. The 'Mary Janes' of Philippines and other poor countries will continue to fall, like prey, into webs of illegal recruitment and human trafficking,; their hopes and tangible needs to clothe, feed and house their loved ones make them vulnerable to abuse. Poverty propels them to work abroad; they are forced to become migrants by systemic inequalities and injustices.

Affirming human dignity and recognizing service with migrants IS service to Jesus himself, we are called to persist, endure and overcome whatever challenges are ahead.

As we remember Filipino migrants around the world, let us also pray:

Dear God, Not one more Mary Jane.

Loving God, give us daring to rescue Filipino migrants, who like luggage on a conveyor belt, go round and round in circles of forced migration.

As they enter and exit the Philippines in a never-ending cycle of vulnerability mixed with dreams and sacrifices

fueled by hope, help us to see in them the face of Christ and join them in their journey.

These migrants leave each day to toil for another nation's growth; they risk life and limb in dangerous and dirty jobs that another country's nationals do not want, in hopes of sending money home. Give us the courage to create a Philippines where no one is forced by circumstance to work abroad; where foreign employment is a free choice and available option; and, where decent employment at home is assured for every Filipino.

Help us to rise as Churches who serve with migrants, stand with migrants, and uphold the dignity of workers around the world. May we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, as well as welcome our migrant's home. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: Let us pray for the needs of the world, especially for our migrant siblings. For all migrant workers who labor in distant lands—for fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from exploitation.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For their families, separated by borders and oceans—for comfort, provision, and the hope of reunion.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For employers, for wisdom to honor the dignity of every worker and uphold just and dignified labor practices.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For governments and policymakers, the courage to enact laws that protect migrants' rights and promote humane policies.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our faith community, for the strength to welcome the stranger, speak for the oppressed, and work for justice.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who have died far from home, and for those who grieve them, for eternal rest and consolation.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Gracious God, who calls us to be neighbors to all, hear these our prayers through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

OFFERING:

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Giver of good gifts and abundant blessings, we praise you for all that we have, knowing that everything we have comes from you. Use this offering, which we give back to you now, for the good of your people everywhere, and especially those migrant workers in foreign lands. May these resources give drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, freedom to the imprisoned, and healing for the sick. And may we, on that last day, be counted among your sheep. We humbly ask this in Jesus' name. **AMEN.**

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Reader 1: Lord, we bring to you the weeping and wailing of our parents of this world, waiting for their children who have disappeared in the sea, in the desert, in uncertainty:

People: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

Reader 2: Migrants and refugees including children, from the war zones of this world, who are fleeing hunger and poverty, in the hope of a better, more secure life.

People: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

Reader 3: We bring to you our lament for those who have died stranded at foreign lands, those who have died fleeing through deserts, mountains and seas. We call upon you and we join in the cry of those who have died seeking justice and a better world.

People: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Reader 1: Lord, we bring to you our shame for turning away and remaining silent. In times of abundant blessings and food on our tables, we do not see that we might also create the causes of hunger. We are insatiable and do not realize that this is the cause of many wars. We're silent when we should speak and act.

People: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Reader 2: Lord, we bring before you our political leaders, who are not making decisions about mere numbers, but about the destiny of many human beings. Sharpen their awareness of how things are interrelated. Keep their consciences alert. Let them develop rules that are guided by humanity and a vision of peace.

People: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Reader 3: Lord, give us the strength to bear witness to the suffering of your children on the run, on their way to us, at our borders, in refugee camps, migrants on foreign lands, in detention, waiting to be deported, in fear of the dangers that lie ahead, in mourning for those who have died. Help us, Lord.

ALL: Hear our prayer. Amen

(adaptation from a prayer of Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and German Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum)

CLOSING SONG:

“GOD OF MIGRANTS AND THE STATELESS”

Hymn Text: Klein F. Emperado

Tune: CONVERSE (Charles Converse)

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

God of migrants and the stateless, God of voices never heard
God of the oppressed and lowly, God of those who are abused
We now gather here lamenting, Hearts so drowned in
hopelessness
Yet we trust that you are with us, God, you side with the
oppressed.

God of those who are not listened, God of those who are
deprived
God of those who cry for justice, God of those who seek just
peace
We are strengthened by your promise, To be with us all our days
God of life, be in our journey, As we seek abundant life

Jesus, Christ our Liberator, God who lived among us all.
God who served those in the margins, God who welcomed one
and all.
We now weep for the injustice, That our people have endured.
Jesus Christ, our friend and Savior, Grieve with all those suffering.

† Spirit, Source of o-ur Comfort, God who strengthens all the
weak.
God who journeys in our struggles, God whose flame inspires us
all.
We are urged now to take action, To pursue what's good and
just
Spirit, grant us ever courage, To build up God's reign of peace.

AMEN

† CLOSING PRAYER:

† SENDING AND BLESSING

Leader: As we prepare to go out from the church to face the challenges of our existence and of the world, we invoke God's blessing on us.

May God bless us, giving us the strength to seek justice.
May God bless us with the wisdom to take care of every living being on earth.

May God bless us, giving the love that raises us to new life.
In the name of the Father, creator of the whole world,
of Jesus Christ, our new Covenant, and of the Holy Spirit,
who opens our eyes and hearts to God.

May we go in peace, giving witness to the hope that we receive in Christ.

All: Amen.

RECESSIONAL:

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Other Reference:

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