

**International Human Rights Day
December 10**

Suggested Gathering Song:

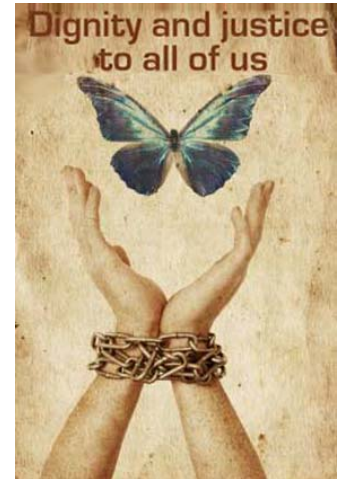
A New Heart For A New World

T Watts/M O'Brien

Leader: Introduction:

Why do we gather to pray this day?

The promotion and protection of human rights has been a major preoccupation for the United Nations since 1945, when the Organization's founding nations resolved that the horrors of The Second World War should never be allowed to recur. Respect for human rights and human dignity "is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world", the General Assembly declared three years later in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1950, all States and interested organizations were invited by the General Assembly to observe 10 December as Human Rights Day (resolution 423(V)). This Day marks the anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Over the years, a whole network of human rights instruments and mechanisms has been developed to ensure the primacy of human rights and to confront human rights violations wherever they occur. (UN website)



Why do we gather to pray this day?

We gather this day because we know that the human rights of millions of people on our planet are denied every day. This denial of human rights results in acute poverty, abuse, violence and despair. We gather together to reflect on this reality and to be in solidarity with those who suffer. We gather so that we may move forward with hearts and minds focused on our work to bring justice for all.

Leader: In this Advent time let us listen to the Prophet Isaiah - 11:6 -10

Reader 1:

The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

The infant will play near the cobra's den,
the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,

for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of our
God
as the waters cover the sea.

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner
for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his
resting place will be glorious.

The word of the Lord



All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Let us pause to reflect on God's word to us

Leader: Let us pray together:

All: God of abundance, gift us with open and generous hearts. Stretch our hearts to constantly work for true harmony and right relationships in our families and communities. Guide us to work for right relationships among the people we work with, the people we socialise with and the people we meet with in the community so that together we can create circles of harmony that spread to bring about a world of justice for all. We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ, bringer of peace. Amen

Leader: Let us listen to the words of Oscar Romero:

Reader 2: God's reign is already present on our earth in mystery.
When the Lord comes, it will be brought to perfection.
That is the hope of Christians.
We know that every effort to better society,
especially when injustice and sin are so ingrained,
is an effort that God blesses,
that God wants,
that God demands of us.

March 24, 1980

Archbishop Oscar Romero spoke these last words on March 24, 1980, minutes
before being suddenly assassinated

(pause)

And words for Catholic Social Teaching



Reader 3: Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community. In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights but also economic rights.... This means that when people are without a chance to earn a living, and must go hungry and homeless, they are being denied basic rights. Society must ensure that these rights are protected.
Economic Justice for All , #17

A number of human rights also concern human welfare and are of a specifically economic nature. First among these are the rights to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and basic education. These are indispensable to the protection of human dignity. ... All persons have a right to security in the event of sickness, unemployment, and old age ... the right to healthful working conditions, to wages, and other benefits sufficient to provide individuals and their families with a standard of living in keeping with human dignity, and to the possibility of property ownership. Economic Justice for All, #80

Leader: Let us pray:

God of justice, stir our hearts to stand in solidarity with all whose rights are daily violated. Confirm in us a resolve to preserve in our commitment to make sure that the common good of all is upheld in every way. We make this prayer through Jesus, bringer of justice. Amen

Suggested Song Response: Open My Eyes

Jesse Manibusan

Leader: Before we pray our litany of Commitment let us pause and call to mind the faces of those whose human rights are denied and violated this day....

Reader 1: We are called to announce the Good News that speaks of justice for all

All: I pledge my love and compassion

Reader 2: We are called to share our resources so that no one goes hungry

All: I pledge my love and compassion

Reader 3: We are called to provide meaningful work for all

All: I pledge my love and compassion

Reader 1: We are called to honour the human dignity of each

All: I pledge my love and compassion

Reader 2: We are called to speak out against slave labour

All: I pledge my love and compassion

Reader 3: We are called to work for a world where people can walk freely in their own land

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Reader 1: We are called to make sure more is spent on feeding people than on weapons

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

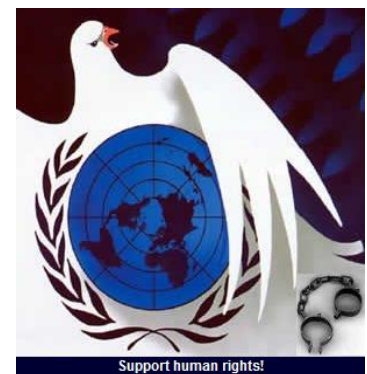
Reader 2: We are called to protect the earth's resources so that there is enough for all

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Reader 3: We are called to protect sick and the vulnerable

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Reader 1: We are called to enable people to determine their own destiny



All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Reader : We are called to take action when women and children are violated

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Reader2: We are called to denounce all takes life

All: We are called to be sister and brother to each other

Leader: As we take leave of our gathering today, let us offer each other a sign of peace and pray a blessing for each other so that we go forth committed to playing our part in bringing about a world of justice and peace.

Suggested Closing Song:

Bring Forth the Kingdom

