

2017

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER JOURNAL

Volume XLIII—A Publication of the World Day of Prayer International Committee



*Am I
Being
Unfair
to You?*

WRITTEN BY WDP WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES



World Day of Prayer Writing Committee, Philippines



Check out the WDPIC Website
here: www.worlddayofprayer.net



Like us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/WDPIC



To read and share these stories
online, visit www.worlddayofprayer.net/journals.html

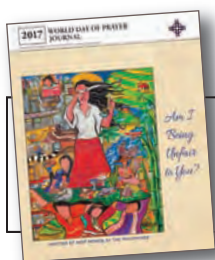
Contents

FEATURES

- 03 From the Chairperson**
Now we know the meaning of
'dagyaw'
- 04 Worship Service Bible Text**
Matthew 20:1-16
- 05 From the Writer Country**
"Am I Being Unfair to You?"
- 42 Leading Together**
- 44 From the Executive Director**
International Committee
Meeting Report
- 48 WDP at a Glance**

WDP AROUND THE WORLD

- 07 Asia**
- 10 Africa**
- 15 Caribbean/North America**
- 20 Europe**
- 33 Latin America**
- 38 Middle East**
- 40 Pacific**



On the Cover: *A Glimpse of the Philippine Situation*, painting by Rowena "Apol" Laxamana-Sta.Rosa for the program written by WDP Philippines.

Now we know the meaning of ‘dagyaw’

BY LAURENCE GANGLOFF

Dear World Day of Prayer sisters and friends, I greet you warmly on behalf of the World Day of Prayer International Committee!

As I’m writing this greeting, hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods are among the breaking news stories. Besides this, politicians and elections bring more fears for tomorrow than peace or hope.

I share this prayer from the Presbyterian Church, USA: Holy One, you are our comfort and strength in times of sudden disaster, crisis, or chaos. Surround us now with your grace and peace through storm or earthquake, fire or flood. By your Spirit, lift up those who have fallen, sustain those who work to rescue or rebuild, and fill us with the hope of your new creation; through Jesus Christ, our rock and redeemer. Amen.

Like the Philippine sisters overcame Typhoon Yolanda-Haiyan, we shall overcome other storms called hatred or disasters. The 2017 theme “Am I being unfair to you?” allowed us to conclude that the vineyard owner (or master) was fair from the beginning: the salary he has promised was paid as it was decided together. Finally, the



Laurence Gangloff, Chairperson,
World Day of Prayer International
Committee

theme sounds like a promise of God’s justice, peace, tenderness, and abundance to us.

In Brazil, “Seeking wisdom to care for God’s Creation” was the theme of the International Committee Meeting (20-27 August 2017), and indeed, we are invited to continue seeking wisdom! On Thursday, we were all invited to dress in black, to support the World Council of Churches campaign against sexual and gender-based violence and violence in general. “Thursday in black” is affirming that we are marching “towards a world without rape and violence.” Let us continue to wear black every Thursday and to say NO to violence against women. Let us be the ones who will bring peace and

happiness, tenderness and light to our world!

Now, we are preparing our communities for the 2018 Suriname theme “All God’s Creation is very good.” Of course, we will ask ourselves “What have we made for the creation?” “How can we heal or repair what was very good from the beginning?”—But before action, let us take time to realize that we are all made like God. I love this quotation from Hans Urs von Balthasar: “What you are is God’s gift to you, what you become is your gift to God.” As God’s creatures, let us do our best to care for God’s creation.

You are holding the Philippines Journal with photos, reports, and experiences from all over the world. It is an overview of the global experiences like a marvelous and colorful bouquet of flowers. Let us take the time to read and discover all the experiences, testimonies, and commitments made by World Day of Prayer leaders in their own local context. Thank you to all the committees and groups who prepared WDP. Thank you to our Philippine sisters. Now, we all know the meaning of “dagyaw” in terms of sharing work, suffering, and hoping together!

*Peace and blessings to you. Thanks for your
commitment to World Day of Prayer!*

Worship Service Bible Text

MATTHEW 20:1-16*

For the kingdom of heaven, is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong;



did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the

last will be first, and the first will be last.

* New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

“Am I Being Unfair to You?”

BY WDP WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES

When we were notified that we were the writer country, I was just starting my term as chairperson. My first reaction was, well, of course! Then there was this realization that this is a big responsibility. The task to let the world know about our country lay before us. Little did we realize that with this opportunity came the great burden to study, to come together, to put our shoulders together and to pray for patience and discernment.

Finding a common time among the members of the writing committee was difficult. Participation of those in the provinces was limited to emails and phone calls and courier services. Resourcefulness and creativity helped us through. When work was finished, we heaved a sigh of relief.

AM I BEING UNFAIR TO YOU?

God's abounding grace is bestowed on both the worthy and unworthy. The question posed by the meditation speaker during our celebration was directed to the church: Is the church being fair to its church worker? The congregation responded with a murmur of agreement to the question but in fact, in many places, pastors and church workers cannot sustain the needs of their families, and equal opportunity is denied to most female pastors.



During the worship, many were moved to tears as the liturgy portrayed the situation of women in our country. The youth gave life to the songs and the scripture text. The local hosts



mobilized their members to prepare the venue and the food, make decorations, and welcome the women attendees. Participants were delighted and inspired when singing the songs of faith and worship. We rediscovered that the deep wounds inflicted by forces within and without the community can be laid before God, and that the community of faith can help

PHILIPPINES



PHILIPPINES



heal the wounds spawned by hate and selfishness. The participants were very thankful that more than a 100 countries stood in solidarity with the Philippines through prayer and action.

INFORMED PRAYER AND PRAYERFUL ACTION

The WDP has long been in the Philippines. However, it has been practiced as a celebration of one day, and has not seeped into daily life. Celebration is a way of thanking God for what has been done the past year and to move forward to the next year of action. The Philippines is so full of God-given natural beauty. The people are so warm, hospitable, resourceful and strong. The varied cultures from north to south are one reason to celebrate. This multiplicity is not at all a stumbling block to ecumenism, but it allows us to see ourselves as a colorful garden of cultural and religious diver-

PHILIPPINES



sity that enriches the wonderful world God has given us.

Our ecumenical relationships should not be limited to churches, but can and must be shared among neighbors. Filipinos are a prayerful people, yet these prayers are often personal and

private. We must learn to engage the community in prayer. This will lead people to use information for prayerful action, finding common ground on community concerns. When the World Day of Prayer comes again, there will be true cause for celebration of unity.

We must learn to engage the community in prayer. This will lead people to use information for prayerful action, finding common ground on community concerns.

Asia



HONG KONG

As we prepared for worship, we read out stories of Filipino women who are victims of domestic violence, migrant domestic workers in the country or abroad, and survivors of disasters in the environment or development policies. These stories called our attention to the sinfulness of structures that consolidate economic inequality; alerting our awareness of our ethical responsibility to answer God's call for justice.

The worship commenced with the procession of 5 women carrying typical daily necessities of the Philippine people: water, oil, rice, fruits and bamboo. A young lady performed a dance carrying a Chinese Scale, reminding the community and churches to support and engage in the continuing struggle for justice for all of God's creation.



Filipinos constitute the largest ethnic minority in Hong Kong, numbering nearly 200,000. We prayed for the Filipino women mothers and wives who withstand the pains and loneliness of being away from family.

Website: www.hkcc.org.hk

INDIA

The World Day of Prayer program provided the opportunity to reflect on and create awareness about human trafficking. The story of Mary

Jane Veloso, a Filipina migrant worker who was used as a drug mule and trafficked to Indonesia, inspired The Women's Concern Ministry (All India Council of Christian Women) and women from member churches to launch a signature and prayer campaign to pressure the Indonesian President to not penalize Mary Jane Veloso.

Indian women also contextualized the worship and discussed the plight of the indigenous and dalit women in India who are the most vulnerable to trafficking. We agreed on the need to engage in advocacy and education in the church about human trafficking, and to empower mothers and teachers about child protection policies to prevent human trafficking and protect people at risk.



JAPAN



SRI LANKA



MALAYSIA



SINGAPORE

JAPAN

Although the Philippines are familiar to us and many Filipino people live in Japan, we were not aware of some of the issues that were lifted up. It is difficult to understand why many people are suffering from poverty in a country that is 80% Christian. There are many non-profit and Christian organizations that support Filipino migrants in Japan as well as groups in the Philippines. The WDP Japanese Committee encouraged our church

members to join and support their activities.

The WDP worship itself is always our joy. Some churches baked cookies with the WDP logo and shared them with participants after the worship. They also wore Filipino dresses or wraps. Many Filipino people and children joined WDP service and some of them gave their message during worship or tea time.

Website: <http://cloister171.blog.fc2.com>

MALAYSIA

This year, the children were excited to do the worship service, since they were given the opportunity to participate and were eager to dramatize the passage Matthew 20:1-16. Their enthusiasm was reflected in their prayers: *'Lord, be the protector and rescuer of children who are tortured and suffering anywhere on earth.'* *'Lord, bless the country and help them in their need. Provide them food. Help them to improve their studies and protect them with health and wonderful weather.'* *'Jesus,*

please bless the Philippines people.' *'O God, please protect the children. Keep them safe. Give them food and water, help them in any trouble.'*

In our program, the plight of foreign workers was identified. If we know of workers being treated unjustly or abused, we agreed to refer them to an NGO that can assist them. We identified with the plight of domestic workers who are overworked, under paid and abused.

SINGAPORE

Our service showed and demonstrated the unity and bonding of love and service. It brought joy and it was awesome to bring together women of various denominations, traditions, and cultures. During the procession, women dressed as farmers and peasants and placed farm products and water on the altar table. We also printed the national flag of Philippines. Relating to the items on the altar, it was excellent and motivating to know and understand the needs of the women in the Philippines, and to pray for them. It really helped us to



think about others outside our everyday life. We came to know their sufferings, situations, and we were able to lift them up to God in our prayers.

SRI LANKA

The speaker at our main service held in Colombo challenged the participants to let justice and peace work side by side in society and in the home as well. She shared a story: A father with two sons and two daughters wills the only house he possesses to his two sons. Daughter #1 is unmarried; daughter #2 is divorced with one child. Fighting and displeasure ensue. The daughters had to leave their home and work as domestic aids in foreign lands. There was no

of Christians in remote areas of Sri Lanka. This is something that WDP members need to address and help our brothers and sisters act accordingly.

TAIWAN

We stressed in the worship that everyone should reflect on if he or she has really led life by the command of Christ—Love your neighbor as yourself. We need to understand the suffering and needs of the Filipino people, followed by taking action. In 2015 thousands of teachers, students, and nuns gathered in the streets of Manila to advocate anti-violence against women. Similarly in our country, religious

justice and therefore no peace in the family.

After 30 years of civil war in Sri Lanka, there is still a feeling that some of us are not being treated fairly. There is still persecution

sects and community centers began uniting to strengthen publicity by forming effective networks with related government agencies (e.g. domestic violence centers) and working on anti-violence against women and children agendas.

We learned that fairness is not only assessed from the acquired resources or wealth, but from a broader perspective—God's love for all mankind. We have a new vision and understanding and need more transitions from self-centeredness to God as the center.

Website: <http://women.pct.org.tw/ministry.aspx>, www.ywca.org.tw

THAILAND

Many social issues were lifted up in our service—such as domestic violence or sex trafficking, migrant domestic workers, and environmental disasters. How can we hear these stories and not realize the sinfulness of structures that consolidate economic inequality? We are called to confess and take on our ethical responsibility to answer God's call for justice.

World Day of Prayer is not just a single day on our calendar. We will keep the women and children of the Philippines in our hearts all year long. We will keep them in prayer and continue to donate to women and children in the Philippines. Thank you to the World Day of Prayer women in the Philippines who wrote the program this year.

Africa



BOTSWANA

We were moved to talk openly about abuse and injustice, particularly gender abuse and sexual abuse of women and girls. Injustice is not only in the Philippines; even in our country it is there and we are quiet about it. The prayer was an eye opener to us. We feel the need to prevent more young girls from getting raped. Many women challenged themselves to start raising awareness about these issues in their communities by openly talking to their neighbors and women in their respective churches. We must help those who are disadvantaged and show love to all people. We were asked to go and live the life that reflects the theme of 2017.

CAMEROON

This year's theme has a powerful message that in God's scheme of



things; all those in need will find adequate work to provide for their families. The parable is a challenge to those who have a hand in shaping the structures of work in today's world. The challenge is whether we, as Christians, can do anything to advance this aspect of God's Kingdom right here and now.

The program also generated feelings of empathy about core issues we also struggle with. We are blessed with abundance of natural resources, but like the Philippines, poverty is widespread, and healthcare is problematic. We are deprived of clean water,

sanitation and infrastructure, and experience high unemployment and underemployment. Women and young people seek greener pastures at great risk. The program helped to release buried emotions of pain, hurt, frustration and understanding. This made it endurable for us—knowing that we are not alone.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

We had an intense conversation as a Committee about the Bible story. As human beings, it seems reasonable that the farmers who worked longer were upset they received the same wage as those who worked less but God does justice to everyone in his own way. God does not judge us based on race, sex, or class.

Relations between women of different denominations are going well. First of



all, the preparatory meetings are with members of all confessions. As we wear uniform by denominations, we decided to exchange the uniform or carry another one's cloth. This shows unity in diversity. The celebration is a great feast where women celebrate with joy.

As the motto suggests us to be informed for praying, we learned about the hunger in the community, then we went out to distribute food to the sick and prisoners.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

We were all very enthusiastic to celebrate this service because we felt it really affected all of us. We wore Filipino dresses to feel closer to our sisters. The situations faced by the Filipino women are the same for us so when they suffer we suffer. However, ideas and experiences for women from different communities can also be different so we must actively acknowledge and connect with others. The theme resonated with us as we learned

that each one of us has our blessings from God and we must not pay attention to what others receive. God is just and we need to recognize what he provides for us.

GABON

We had two services in the three days devoted to the celebration of WDP with about 200 participants. We had a celebration on Thursday at the Catholic Church for an opening Mass, and a worship on Friday, March 3, and other activities for the closing worship. The bible story was materialized into a small dramatization and during all this we felt a prayer union with our sisters of WDP Philippines.

The theme for this service really highlighted for us the difference between divine justice and human justice. Our justice is based on established rules made by men and when they decide those rules have been broken. Divine justice is based on spiritual ethics, which is based on our equality in the eyes of God. Our God provides for us

as he sees fit and He always provides for us.

GHANA

The program presented a critical period for reflection on the concept of being just and supportive of a vulnerable person or group. One young woman shared an exemplary personal story about her former employer's treatment of her and her colleague hired for domestic work.

The joy of the ecumenical space was in the beauty of unity in diversity where each church was brought to bear on the service. The different uniforms and different languages all created a great relationship. Domestic violence was very much discussed and identified as an area where church women should be concerned. The ecumenical commitment to jointly advocate against domestic violence showed how this social cancer affects all of us. Participants were happy to learn about the Filipino people and their history.

The bible story was materialized into a small dramatization and during all this we felt a prayer union with our sisters of WDP Philippines.



MADAGASCAR

We learned that God loves us all; that there is no partiality, and we have to love one another. The children were very enthusiastic to learn about the Philippines, saying, “It is marvelous to know about children around the world!” and “What is the next country?” The actions suggested were to give clothes and food to prisoners and spread the good news. After the worship service, participants shared the lunch meal together. As an ecumenical community, we often go on excursions together, hold worship services, and meetings to live out our WDP Madagascar motto “that they may all be one” (John 17:21a).



MAURITIUS

On our island we had 11 services with over 500 participants. The service was held in churches, schools, villages, and in some people’s homes. We were all happy to be part of a prayer chain for the Philippines.

At the beginning of the services there was an icebreaker moment where everyone stood up to welcome each other with the greeting “Mabuhay.” Then there was an explanation of the artist and her artwork, along with a look into the cultural practice of *dagyaw*. Our participants were amazed by the artwork and appreciated the idea of *dagyaw* because it is practiced for the construction of a healthy society.

There was also a parade where the children carried the Filipino flag, a Filipino native sang the national anthem, the children sang “We Are the World,” and teenagers mimed the

KENYA

Everybody was impressed as the theme touched the home relationship between a husband and wife, the children and their parents, also the relationship between you and your co-workers, your neighbors, your friends, the National Committee members, or even your church. How do you relate with them? How many times have you been unfair to them? How do you cope with them? It changed the lives of so many

people because they altered their ways of interacting with each other. Even the children said that they learned that when we are unfair to our playmates, it does not please God. We received so many comments from people individually and from the churches. Learning about the Philippines was also an eye-opener. We should pray for each other worldwide because the problems that really touch women and children are nearly the same locally.



parable. The overall atmosphere of the celebration was that of generosity, solidarity, sharing, and love. One person said, “this day without jealousy or selfishness is like a reflection of the light of the kingdom of God.”

NIGERIA

The atmosphere was electrifying as the service started. We learned from this year’s theme to be fair to people in spite of challenges that confront us. We should be strong in the belief that God is there for us. God is fair and just. One should endeavor to be

obedient, humble and contented with one’s lot, spiritual ‘wages’ inclusive. Being in prayer with the Filipino people, we feel moved by the conditions of the people, especially the natural disasters such as typhoons which cause losses of many lives and property. Their economic imbalance and prevailing injustice cross reference the story of Merlyn, Nicole, Celia, and Editha. We feel very much concerned as Christians to pray with others who are suffering ill-treatment. We imagine ourselves in their shoes even though we have similar challenges in

our country. We prayed from deep down in our hearts.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

We had 10 services and about 800 participants across our country. The theme and celebration aroused a great deal of enthusiasm. The joy is always in coming together for a single cause and sharing it with the world. The subject of justice within a society was an important topic throughout the service and the women focused on lifting up the injustices faced by the women of their own country and the Philippines. We must advocate for justice every chance we get. We felt the strength and courage of the Filipinos through their words in the worship. They combat injustice with dignity and self-respect and are an example to us all. We understood their suffering and in that we felt united and sympathized with them greatly.

SEYCHELLES

As we celebrate WDP something marvelous is revealed. This year we experienced the deep love of Christ in motion. Small bags of rice prepared in advance were shared amongst members of the congregation. No unfairness. Rice was available for everyone even though it was in a small bag as a sample and gift. Contacts with Filipino women in Seychelles expressed sharing of Christ’s love. They shared prayers in the service and a testimony. Their presence, together with the decoration at the altar (fruits, vegetables, salt fish), revealed the Philippines within Seychelles. Many Filipino women immigrate to other countries as for better opportunities.

We felt that most of the people in the Philippines are facing the same problems we are facing in our country.

Additional prayers were said for the Philippines and those in authority there that peace may prevail.

SOUTH AFRICA

The groups in our country could relate completely with the circumstances of the women in the Philippines. Ladies dressed up like the woman in the artwork. The symbolic use of the rice packets made a huge impact, and a lot of discussion in the program focused on the sharing of resources. Many congregations distributed packets of rice, fruit, and food parcels to the needy as part of the celebrations. Children took part in dances, song, and Scripture readings. A 9-year-old girl sang the Lord's Prayer, and a 3½ year old little girl sang "Jesus loves me". To address the epidemic of violence against women and children, WDP donated to organizations that focus on the wellbeing of women and children.

Website: www.wwdp.co.za

ZAMBIA

The worship area for our celebration was well decorated with many colors. Most people said it was a new Garden of Eden. The theme allowed for good reflection on fairness and how we have treated our families and community. Even the children enjoyed learning about being fair and



sympathizing with others through poems and sketches. The program prompted discussion on the various aspects of injustices against women. Suggestions were made to lobby for advocacy on women rights. As an ecumenical community, we have implemented some women empowerment programs in the communities as a way to put "wheels to prayer." It was good to know about the Filipino culture and their daily life, including the political sphere.

ZIMBABWE

Our decorations reflected the oneness of the Filipino people and the challenges they face as they

work on the farms. The money they get is not enough to sustain them so they share among themselves the little they get. We felt that most of the people in the Philippines are facing the same problems we are facing in our country. Despite the country being blessed with natural resources, most of the people are poor. Participants raised that women and children are the ones who feel the effects of the country's problems. The children loved the history of the children of Philippines. They now know that there is a country named Philippines, and how they live on all the small and big islands.

Caribbean/North America



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

We conducted three worship services with approximately 500 participants in all. The children reported, “We look forward to being a part of the World Day of Prayer each year—taking part in the skits, dancing or even doing a reading or helping to give out the programs.”

The social issues lifted up in our WDP services and activities were abuse of women and children. As a solution, some suggested that women and children should be taught independence, and that young children should be encouraged to stay in school. Currently we have classes in arts and crafts and sewing for our young people. These skills will help them prosper later in life.

BAHAMAS

As we prepared for the day of prayer, the excitement grew, especially among the Filipino women who



attended committee meetings. We were all elated and looked forward with great anticipation to the day of prayer. When our Filipino sisters learned that their country wrote the service for this year and that we would be praying for the Philippines, they were filled with joy and enthusiasm.

The very first reader, a young woman from the Philippines, began to read and broke out in loud sobs, crying for the people of her country. The whole congregation was visibly moved, and this set the tone of the service. The congregation responded with the song, “In times like these, we need a savior; In times like these, we need an anchor; Be very sure your anchor holds and grips the solid rock. This rock is Jesus...”

BARBADOS

“Am I being unfair to you?” caused the women joining the celebration to look closer at themselves. The stories of the Filipino women went deeper than wages. Some women in the services sought to take their power back due to unhealthy situations in which they find themselves.

Being in prayer for another country, feels as if you are trying as hard as you can to help from far away. I always imagine the hundreds of persons praying from the distant countries and causing change to come about. Our challenge is to build ecumenical relationships, and it is one that we should not back away from. When women of different denominations come

BARBADOS**CANADA**

together to worship it is a joy. The building of these relationships should be encouraged more than once a year.

CANADA

In Canada, there are many people with connections to the Philippines through personal heritage, faith communities, caregiving relationships, seafaring, and activism on issues such as labor and mining. Tagalog is the fastest growing language here and Canada is the third largest destination for overseas Filipino workers. The close connections between Canadians and Filipinos brought great energy to the celebration and a deep sense of connection to the World Day of Prayer this year.

Our organization has been abundantly blessed to steward the World Day of Prayer in Canada and to help

**GUYANA**

the voices of all women be heard. The service in turn gave us connections to women working for justice throughout the world. Leonora Obara of Kenya best captured the essence of World Day of Prayer saying that the work she and other women are doing in their community is not a project of resources, but a project of love.

Website: www.wicc.org

Facebook: WIC Canada

Twitter: WICC_CA

DOMINICA

By following the order of service closely we were able to become acquainted with the Filipino lifestyle and their hardships and related it to our life in Dominica. Being in prayer with them was a good experience as we are all people of God no matter our race or what part of the world we live in. We are

all connected and can relate to one another. The theme allowed us to reflect on how there are many people in need in various parts of the world and if we can work together and share our goods their needs can be met. We lifted up the issues of poverty and illnesses during our service and decided to donate part of our offering to the Cancer Society, which allows the people who cannot afford it to receive cancer care.



GUYANA

It was enlightening to be in prayer with the people of the Philippines—as if we are one with them and their culture, struggles, and greatness. The women are strong and passionate, and really work hard to overcome the hardships in their life. We will keep them in our prayers as we continue to pray for each other.

We prayed that people will not be left in poverty due to the many typhoons the country is faced with yearly. We prayed for the eradication of child abuse and domestic violence, and we prayed that the government would put systems in place to provide for the less fortunate.

Children from the different Sunday schools present also recited prayers for the children and families of the Philippines. The children also participated in a fun *dagyaw* harvesting activity where they realized the importance of

working together to achieve a common goal.

JAMAICA

We share similar concerns and situations as the Filipino people, and so when we pray we are essentially seeking to find the same answers and solutions to the common problems we face. Social issues such as violence against women and children, human trafficking, and homelessness were lifted up in our WDP services. Actions such as social intervention and public awareness seminars were suggested.

A special children's service was also held at one location. The children conducted the service based on the order provided. One activity was painting of the flag. They participated very enthusiastically.

The basic challenge in our ecumenical work is that of being from different

denominations, everyone has their own projects and commitments. Time constraints are another matter, and the difficulty to attract younger members. However, in the end we are working towards the same end to make a difference in our church and communities.

MONTSERRAT

We held a spiritual retreat in January to reflect on the theme with the help of two speakers from the Philippines. They spoke about the country, the presence of the Catholic Church, and their passion for food. They cooked for us and we left the retreat well informed. It is truly a pleasure to continue building ecumenical relations amongst the Christian denominations on Montserrat. A total of twelve organizations or church groups most of which are women groups participated in this year's activities.



banner above the cross and draped colored cloths down it to emulate the flag. During the service, the social issues lifted up were honesty and justice. How do we stay honest and just when we face difficult times? It was good to share the story of the Filipino women with each other and to be reminded that the righteousness of God is not to be compared with that of humans.

Website: <http://wgdsuriname.wixsite.com/wgdsuriname>



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

The worship theme made us aware of the need to constantly engage in reflection as we act and interact with others. We must address issues even if they do not directly affect us but which are oppressive to others. God's love is not unfair but righteous! His love is universal and unconditional.

Being in prayer with the Filipino people gave us a strong sense of solidarity. Domestic violence, minimum wages, and neglected children are all issues we deal with in our communities and we lifted them up in our prayers. Based on the motto, *Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action*, it was suggested that the creation of safe spaces be our top priority in order to provide moral and practical support to others, as we are doing with the craft classes, where women come together and learn skills that can be used to generate income.

TURKS & CAICOS

Our service came alive with the presence of native Filipinos. They read parts of the service, gave a

We felt connected with the Filipino people. We have experienced hurricanes and typhoons. Natural disasters disrupt societies through destruction of life and property. Prayer helps in the healing process. We lifted up in prayers the economic situation faced by workers especially women, domestic workers, seasonal agricultural workers, women suffering from abuse and rape, and people recovering from typhoons.

SURINAME

It is a challenge to prepare the service with different denominations because everyone has their own traditions and programs to follow in their own churches but through this we persevere and we learn new things about each other every year. We still hold preparatory meetings where we study the background information, the bible study, and the other resources provided. When it was time to decorate we hung a theme bearing



brief description of their islands, sang indigenous songs, wore their traditional dress, and even brought traditional food items to share. We were able to get a better understanding and clearer picture of what life is like in their country. Their presence made us feel like we were truly one in God and one in mission. Our people truly enjoyed the service and many commented on how they thought it was one of the best we ever had. Due to the scattered nature of our islands it is difficult to get members together to begin preparations but we work our hardest to spread the service across the islands as many churches enjoy participating!

US VIRGIN ISLANDS

Although the preparations for the celebration were difficult this year, the service was well attended and joyous. The space was decorated with palms, a Bible, a cross, and a bowl for the rice—which was distributed to the congregation by children. It was a good experience for us to be in prayer with our Filipino sisters as we lifted up some of the issues we also face on the islands. Our women also suffer from domestic abuse and sexual trafficking and under our local laws there is little to no statistics or complaints kept. There is a small organization in our area that supports people who have endured domestic abuse

and we hope to work with them in the future.

UNITED STATES

The many islands of the Philippines were celebrated and uplifted during the services all across the country. Since there are many Filipino immigrants in the US, many churches invited Filipino members of churches or members of the community to speak during their services. In this way, the women were able to truly connect with the Filipino culture and history. For example, the sharing of rice and the discussion of *dagyaw* was a part of many services. It sparked discussions on how to give back and participate on a daily basis and how to share our gifts with others.

The ecumenical aspect of World Day of Prayer continues to be a major reason participants enjoy the program. One person shared, “this service is looked forward to every year by our congregation. It is one of the few times where we get together with other women from different churches. Learning about a different country each year adds to our prayer practice and reminds us that we are not alone.”

Website: www.wdp-usa.org

Facebook: WorldDayOfPrayerUSA

One person shared, “this service is looked forward to every year by our congregation. It is one of the few times where we get together with other women from different churches. Learning about a different country each year adds to our prayer practice and reminds us that we are not alone.”

Europe



ALBANIA

We feel very near to the Filipino women when we pray for them, we lift up their problems and the injustice they face. We love them. We are a poor country with a lot of problems such as corruption and others. This year's theme prompted discussion about how we treat each other. Participants brought up many examples of how they are treated in their work places by their bosses and supervisors. In Albania, there are a lot of companies who use Albanian workers like slaves. We also experience a lot of discrimination against women. We decided to prepare a letter to our

government about how to treat workers in the work place.

AUSTRIA

The WDP of Austria, especially of Salzburg is 65 years old. So, for the first time, the service was held in the Cathedral of Salzburg with 500 Christians, women, men, and children attending. It was ideal that the Philippines had prepared this year's liturgy as there are many people of the Philippines living in Salzburg. A children's music group of the Philippines delighted the visitors with their performance. In the liturgy, women of the Philippines parish in Salzburg

gave their voice to the "Filipinas" and afterwards served delicious dishes of their home country for the group. A great number of Filipinas participated at the congregations and therefore a strong bond emerged.

Website: www.weltgebetstag.at

Facebook: weltgebetstagderfrauen

BELGIUM

The service was held at the Lutheran Church and the other denominations were invited to join us. Through the program we learned about the needs from the people of



CROATIA



BULGARIA

Philippines and the challenges they face in their everyday life.

Facebook: Wereldgebedsdag België

BULGARIA

One of our participants, who has been in Moscow, shared her impressions about Filipino workers in rich Russian families—their kindness and vulnerability. Her account made us love them and thus added strength to our prayers.

The pastor of the Methodist church in Sofia, where WDP 2017 was held, shared some photos he had taken during his visit to the Philippines a couple of years ago, reporting about one of the tropical typhoons, which had seriously damaged the place he was visiting with other people. Of course, this made us more sensitive to the situation in that country.

Our prayer for Bulgaria specifically was about the needs of the Roma population, especially children that are not in school. They live in poverty and are easily manipulated by politicians. A change of mind is needed at all levels of the Bulgarian Society and we pray for that.



CZECH REPUBLIC

CROATIA

We felt connected to our Filipino sisters and their fight for equal rights, against poverty and the need for change. We became aware of the fact that we are all invited to work in God's vineyard when we feel the invitation—which might come at different periods of our life. We realized that lay people should be more engaged in social and political life, trying to be a seed of change.

The most important social issue raised in the service referred to the problem of women's inequality and the need for active involvement in the environment. We also related to the fact that workers do not receive their deserved salaries, and most of them are exploited because a small percentage of rich people own the land.

Website: www.wdp-croatia.com

Facebook: SMDhrvatska

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Philippines is close to our people. Some Filipino women live and work here, got married and have had families in the Czech Republic. They have joined churches here. Some of them also joined WDP services and shared their life experiences and facts about their country. They really enjoyed the Philippine rice cakes made by Czech women! At our monthly prayers meetings, we prayed for the women who balance multiple jobs to feed their children, people working abroad, and families seeking investigation of their lost or killed relatives.



DENMARK

The children who participated were significantly impacted by the small portion of rice that was to be sufficient for the whole day. They noted the contrast to our country where children generally do not suffer from lack of food. In the town Orlová, they received a small amount of rice in a little packet to remember this disparity in the future.

Facebook: Světový den modliteb - český výbor

DENMARK

It is very enriching to be “face-to-face” with the writer country. We got first-hand information about the Philippine culture and the experiences of leaving ones country and adjusting to a new culture, a new language, and a whole new environment from the Filipinos who came to our service. This made us very aware of the injustice they face daily and how we must stand against these injustices. There are many au-pair girls living in



ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

Denmark and, as we lifted them up in our prayers, we vowed to monitor their situations when possible so they may not face any injustices.

We believe that we can learn with our senses, so we decorated the space with various Filipino items that people could touch, see, and smell. It was a great way to learn without a single word being said.

Website: www.kvindebodedag.dk



ESTONIA

ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

As well as our usual preparation days, the National Committee for England, Wales and Northern Ireland also ran a weekend conference for younger women. Here is one attendee’s comment: “Bible study really opened up a parable I always disliked in a new and fascinating way—absolutely inspiring.”

During services, branches used different ways of helping those present to understand the Bible passage better; some dramatized it, others read it in a modern transcription. At least one branch acted out a modern retelling of the story. They were also encouraged to arrange their worship space so that those present were seated in a circle, as requested by the Christian women of the Philippines. One



FINLAND

branch worshipping in a church with fixed pews devised a novel solution: they passed a ribbon round for people to hold for the circle. A member of the congregation commented on how effective and meaningful this was.

Website: www.wwdp.org.uk

Facebook: Women's World Day of Prayer—England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Twitter: [wwdp@WWDPforEWNI](https://twitter.com/wwdp@WWDPforEWNI)

ESTONIA

The theme sparked interesting and lively discussions before, during, and after the service at the 18th century church we held the program in. The service became very personal and touched everyone deeply. In the sermon, the Pastor stressed how important it was to take the theme, “Am I Being Unfair to You?”, and ask if we are the ones being unfair. Too often, we feel we are the victims of situations and we must take a moment to analyze our roles. In connection



FAROE ISLANDS

with the Filipino people we prayed for them and for the Estonian people.

There is an event that is held all over Estonia on Good Friday called “Crossroad.” Participants choose prayers and carols then travel from church to church performing them. The event is ecumenical and both adults and children participate so it was a great way to come together.

FAROE ISLANDS

The service this year took place in the Catholic Church and we were lucky to have a lot of Filipino women participate. During the procession, the women were wearing their traditional dresses and came dancing in the church one by one with the different

objects—a pitcher of water, a bunch of leaves similar to a rice stem, and a bottle of oil. One woman carried an indigenous cloth and another dressed like the woman in the art work, holding a scale with one of her eyes covered. Three others held a basket with a platter of dry fish, raw rice, and fruits. Another one held the art work where everybody could see it.

It is really great to come together to prepare the service, forgetting what or where we belong to, all having the same Lord, praying to the same Lord and serving the same Lord. It gives us so much joy and strength.

FINLAND

WDP in Finland was celebrated in five locations: Helsinki (the capital), Jyväskylä, Tampere, Sysmä, and Kuopio. We did a pantomime that portrayed getting equally paid/saved. The theme about the first and the last getting paid exactly the same wages after the workday reflects the absoluteness of God's grace. No one can boast and refer to her/his own



merits. We all get saved by grace only. This was felt strongly during our pantomime.

Our offering will go toward programs against trafficking in human beings, especially women, and to protect young people in Syria from traffickers. The Common Responsibility Campaign is a nationwide social movement based on the philosophy “love thy neighbor,” and is the annual fundraising campaign of the Finnish Lutheran Church. It helps those in need irrespective of their origin, faith, or political convictions both in Finland and in developing countries.

Website: www.ywca.fi/00010707 -
maailman-rukouspaiva

FRANCE

When you read the parable for the first time, the initial reaction is to identify with the workers who worked all day and got rewarded the same as those who worked less. However, we must remember that God is just and His justice is not like ours. The relation between equality



and justice is more complex in God’s kingdom. God gives according to the needs of each person. We felt that the Filipino tradition of *dagyaw* truly represented this story and is great example of solidarity.

Another part of the service that stood out to us was the confessional text where the Philippine women repeated the notion of making excuses for why we as a whole have not done as much as we can for justice and peace. They had the courage to say what we all tend to do sometimes—hide behind “good excuses.” We must not remain insensitive to the issues around the world. We must stay vigilant and act!

Website: <http://jmp.protestants.org>

Facebook: Journee Mondiale De Priere France

GERMANY

The Philippine ambassador was invited to speak at a WDP regional preparatory workshop. She was quite pleased to note that her country was the focus of women’s groups throughout Germany. She later reported

that the Philippine embassy performed its own WDP service, using the official liturgy!

We are alarmed at the abuse of human rights in the Philippines. Through the WDP activities, we received information from Amnesty International and other activists in the civil society. Some women lent their signatories to a letter of protest addressed to the Philippine embassy in Berlin. The letter urged the Embassy to use its influence to make sure that the death penalty not be re-introduced and that the abuse of human rights be curtailed.

Website: www.weltgebetstag.de

Facebook: weltgebetstag



HUNGARY

GREECE

The Sunday school children were excited and eager to learn new things about a different country, a different creation of our Lord, the Philippines. A week after our children's service, we went on a picnic and the children played the traditional "Pitik Bulag" game. Needless to say, they loved it and laughed hard during the play. They even asked to play it every Sunday before the service.

It is always so delightful to teach these little creatures about a different part of the world, which our Lord has created in such a perfect way. And the most important thing is that through these WDP programs, they realize that they should not be afraid of diversity. Because after all, it is much more interesting to be different—they always have something to discover and learn!

HUNGARY

During the celebration, we had the experience of interconnectedness



ICELAND

in the world God created. In the prayer, the spiritual unity came into being. It is highly powerful that we use the same liturgy and pray at the same time all over the world. Among the prayers of many thousands of people, our prayer goes up to God as if we had handed the Creator a beautiful and colorful bunch of flowers.

A report on the celebration from a senior citizens' home said: "Seniors often have the feeling that they are superfluous. The WDP means a confirmation for them, namely that through prayers they can do something important for a lot of people although their

visual perception and their hearing have deteriorated and they cannot look after themselves."

Website: <http://www.meot.hu/noim>

Facebook: Ökumenikus Világimanap —WDP HUN

ICELAND

When we consider the WDP motto *Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action*, the information part is very important. We do feel that the prayers are more powerful and earnest when we understand the realities behind the prayer requests. Thus, we always try to show the slides and reflect on the situation in the writer country. This year, the chair of the Icelandic Bible Society, Ragnhildur Ásgeirsdóttir, was our speaker, and she connected the message of Matthew 20 with some real situations she had experienced travelling for the Bible Society.

Since the early 1960s, this interchurch cooperation through WDP has the



IRELAND



LITHUANIA



ITALY

longest story of all ecumenical works in Iceland. Women and men from various denominations often participate in the services, and thus there is a truly ecumenical spirit hovering over the prayer meetings. This has only brought us joy.

Facebook: Alþjóðlegur bænadagur kvenna

IRELAND

Our services were well attended and very successful! There are many Filipinos living and working in our country and some of them

attended the services. Sharing our cultural experiences certainly helped us create a better understanding and a greater bond with one another. One of our services was televised and we had a Filipino choir sing. The members brought objects and instruments that represented their culture and we added them to our prayer space. This gesture gave us all a great sense of inclusivity. When we learned more about the Filipino culture we realized we had certain similarities. For example, *meitheal* is an old Irish tradition where people in rural communities gathered together on a neighbor's farm to help plant and

harvest crops, a tradition very similar to *dagyaw*.

ITALY

For the first time, a Filipino Catholic nun was involved in the preparation of a local WDP. She comes from the city of Cebu, the same city of the project which will receive the offering of the Italian WDP. She was happy for two reasons: for having met new sisters and a new ecumenical movement, and for helping her country with a concrete action.

We are aware of the difficult situation of the migrants who arrive to our country, so we suggested contacting the women migrants who live in our cities and try to get to know each other better. One of the enemies we need to defeat is the fear of the stranger, so we welcome every occasion to build communion between people from different cultures and religion.



Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/gmpitaliana/home>

LITHUANIA

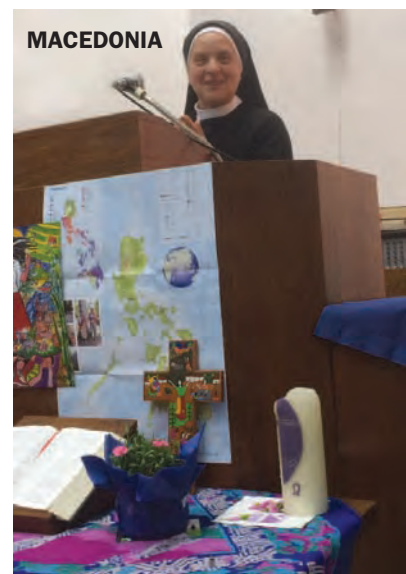
We translated all the resource materials and sent it to local teams to use for Bible studies and preparations for WDP services. We followed the suggestion of the Filipino women and put “rice” on the table for the celebration, but instead of rice, we shared bread. Bread is the basic fruit of people’s labor in Lithuania, like rice is in Philippines.

The notion of common work, or *dagyaw* in the Philippines, taught us the wonderful sustaining practice of community building—doing it without any institutions, just working together. Whatever our activities might be, the ecumenical spirit always prevails: Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Orthodox, Reformed, Methodists celebrated WDP in one spirit.

LUXEMBOURG

The stories of the different women in the liturgy were a highlight for us this year. When we prayed with the women of the Philippines, we felt that special connection that we feel every year with the women of WDP. Children were very keen to participate. There was a lot of discussion and they were very interested to learn about children who must work to support their families.

We live out the WDP motto by trying to build the committee and celebrating everything we can. We try to be active as much as we can, wherever we can. We learned that in one region of our country, someone who knows about WDP prepared an independent celebration with some women. Once we learned of it, we told her to be in contact with us for our materials next year.



*Whatever our activities
might be, the ecumenical
spirit always prevails:
Roman Catholics,
Lutherans, Orthodox,
Reformed, Methodists
celebrated
WDP in one spirit.*

Website: <http://www.acfl.lu/de/weltgebetstag>

MACEDONIA

The WDP service is mainly the only ecumenical service for women in the year, so many women can’t wait to attend it together with neighbors and friends from other denominations. After the service, in almost all congregations we gather, having tea, cake and good talks.

In Strumica, we always have nice decorations. This year we had an old



scale on the altar, flowers and napkins in the colors of the Philippines, and baskets with packages of seeds, which were given to the women as a gift. Many women said later that the seeds grew fruits and nice flowers. That's a good lesson: even from very small seeds grow nice things. Even if we are a small group who loves ecumenical events, the seed will grow into nice fruits.

THE NETHERLANDS

In our country it's so difficult to reach out to people from every denomination. We all think ours is the right one and the others are not 'the real thing'! We are so pleased when we see women connecting through our information days, as they would never talk to each other in their everyday

life. We—as members of the Dutch committee—really believe we can cross borders and realize in fact we are all the same, and we are able to listen and talk about difficulties together!

We have tried to find a way to be able to support projects and people directly in their communities. We will channel our offering to those projects and peoples.

Website: www.wereldgebedsdag.nl

Facebook: Wereldgebedsdag-Nederland

NORWAY

WDP in Norway celebrates its 90th anniversary this year, with an unbroken line of prayer

celebrations all over the country. We held approximately 100 celebrations. The tradition of praying around the world is deeply rooted in Norway, as is ecumenism. WDP gives all of us an opportunity to invite and cooperate with people from different denominations, and even women outside of churches. One Christian newspaper gave us good attention on the World Day of Prayer.

This year was special because so many Filipino women live in Norway. In one service, Filipino women from the neighborhood were invited to come and cook spring rolls. The aspects of justice, solidarity with others, taking care of the environment and including others in loving and serving communities were drawn out from the theme. We emphasized the Bible verse where Jesus, before he died, invited his crucified neighbor.

POLAND

In the preparatory process for our celebration, we met a Roman Catholic sister who worked in a home for women in Manila led by her congregation. She introduced us to the Philippines and all aspects of life there. We saw many pictures and felt



her love for the country and its people. We heard “first hand” about the Filipino people and their daily life with all its problems and joys.

We find that often the problems, sorrows, and joys presented by the writing country are very similar to our own. Participants to the celebration begin to be aware of problems mentioned in the liturgy which are very close to them. People begin to help in their own contexts, not just give an offering for the writing country. They begin to see problems in their own families, working places or their communities.

PORTUGAL

We decorated the liturgical space according to the suggestion of the Filipino women. It conveyed the sensation that all the displayed elements were created and worked by men and women with much effort and even tears. They work very hard, many hours a day, to earn money to support their families.

The material sent by the Filipino sisters was so rich in information that it seemed as if we were there in the Philippines. We could live the situations and difficulties as if they were ours. To be in prayer with Filipino sisters made us one, made us stronger.

The ecumenical relationships built through WDP bring women and communities together, and tightens the bonds of friendship, trust and sharing among women. Through WDP, our faith and relationship with God grows and we increasingly surrender to others.

ROMANIA

This year’s theme inspired us to say: We have to speak about injustice! It is an important task of ours to undertake the fight for social justice every time and everywhere, especially with regard to sisters and brothers living with discrimination. God opens our “spiritual eyes” to see this, and urges us to pray for those who experience oppression. No one is better than another in the sight of God. God’s

justice is not according to our human measures; therefore God gives everybody a chance for a new beginning. Mercy wins over injustice!

During our celebration, we made a suggestion to support the local small producers who sell organic food on the market. More people should buy food from them, and not from multinational companies. We should use natural remedies, the pharmacy of God, and the recipes of the grandparents.

RUSSIA

We tried to unite two themes this year: the theme of Philippines and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The Reformation came to Russia in 1544 with the first Lutheran settlers in Moscow who came to work as merchants, officers, and soldiers. The theme of Philippines was up-to-date because the theme of being fair, the theme of justice is an eternal issue for all the nations. People will ultimately find justice in God who liberates, teaches, consoles, and nourishes.



RUSSIA



SERBIA

In Moscow this year, we celebrated the WDP together with the Catholic Church. The director of St. Thomas' Jesuit University preached at the service. There were also sisters from Caritas with us. The WDP together with Prayers for Christian Unity is a good opportunity for both churches to build good relationships not only personally, but also on the ecumenical level.

SCOTLAND

Overall there were approximately 30,000 participants in the celebrations around the country! Activities were held in churches, schools, hospitals, and homes. We work intensely to promote WDP. Nationally, there is an overnight retreat that encourages building relationships among the committees. Regionally, we share bible studies together and locally, meetings are held to begin preparations. We had the pleasure of sharing the service with some of our Filipino sisters who enjoyed the service and longed for a visit back home.

The theme highlighted the link between prayer and action. We must be proactive and address wrongs rather

than turn a blind eye. We have to share resources and build a society founded in unity. For example, in Orkney, the fishermen are not used to the extreme cold weather so the community knitted hats for them to wear while they work.

Website: www.wdpScotland.org.uk

SERBIA

The WDP liturgy was read in 5 languages. We very much enjoyed preparing the celebration and being together in various ecumenical events. The main challenge for us is how to involve Orthodox women (the majority Church in Serbia) and live ecumenism fully. When we achieve this, it will be an example of unity in our country.

During the preparation of the celebration we noted that nearly the same issues affecting the Philippines are present here in Serbia. The most urgent issue besides the economic crisis and poverty is a brain drain. The children of many of our women left Serbia and went to the western region. Some of these children work on cruises together with young Filipinos.

Thanks to our Savior, the Holy Spirit makes us closer to the Filipino women and suddenly, somebody, who lives so far from us becomes very close to us and one of us.

SLOVAKIA

The problems of the Philippines are to a certain extent also problems of families in Slovakia. Especially where women are exploited and their value are underestimated. On the other hand, the strength of Filipino women is in their solidarity and their mutual support and hope. The Philippines are rich in many beauties, abundant fauna and flora, that can't be found in Slovakia, but also the poverty is extreme, mostly because of the lack of good-paying jobs. Many families suffer due to their mothers' absence.

When we talked about growing rice, Matúš—a ten-year old boy—said: "From now on I will eat more rice so that parents in the Philippines have work and can stay with their kids."

Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/sdmslovensko>



SLOVENIA

At a national TV station we presented the WDP as an international movement, as we have people from abroad. We shared about WDP in Slovenia and Croatia, as well as the idea of the service's main Biblical text and what it means in our everyday life. We had an open discussion of how a Christian woman lives her values in a secularized and material world.

What kind of economy should Christians support? How does a Christian live in this materialistic world? The logic—"not only me, also others can have"—does not work today. To change this market logic is very difficult. But

God's justice is mercy. Living justice as a Christian means to live it every day. A portion of our offering will be sent to Pag-asa in Tagaytay, Philippines to support dental machine repair. Pag-asa operates different facilities for children and families that face financial problems.

SPAIN

In Madrid we invited Filipino people of different denominations who gladly attended the service and participated actively in it. Afterwards, they wrote to us thanking us. They shared the poster, photos, and information about the service on their Facebook page, and received responses

and photos from friends from WDP in Bolivia, Canada, and France. It was a wonderful experience to feel united in spirit in diverse parts of the world.

The bible studies helped us become more aware of the importance of hospitality and embracing migrants and refugees, especially young people, who have left their communities because of war and hunger, and who come to our country in hopes of finding a better future. We have to create spaces for them. To encourage this idea we decided to support training for young Filipino women.

SWEDEN

World Day of Prayer gatherings were held in lots of locations from the polar circle in the far north to the southern tip of the country.

The World Day of prayer provides a natural way of connecting with the women in immigrant churches. With the help of the New York office and our sisters in Palestine and Egypt, we were able to provide programs in Arabic for services in several cities. Syrian-Orthodox churches hosted ecumenical services in Enköping and Södertälje.



Dried fruit from a Filipino organization that works against sexual exploitation of children was sampled and sold at the service in Kumla. At the service in Linköping the organizers reported, “Our speaker, a former missionary to the Philippines, emphasized that it is the Filipino women who carry their society, exactly as shown in Rowena Laxamana-Santa Rosa’s theme poster.”

Website: <http://www.sek-vbd.se>

SWITZERLAND

There were about 800 celebrations across Switzerland. Many communities celebrated WDP together with Filipino immigrants, who were often involved with the preparations. The personal contact helped us to feel close to the Filipino people and to understand better their situation.



Through interviews, we were shown the typical problems Filipinas face: destruction of the home by a hurricane, abuse as a domestic worker, and exploitation as workers on a plantation.

One of the projects we support is a workshop for women, which gives them the chance to earn money by producing different products made from reed. They produced writing cases especially for us, which we put up for sale. In the Philippines, we are supporting ecological agriculture, education in gender justice to avoid violence, a project to protect children from abuse and human trafficking, handicraft workshops for women to improve their financial situation, and help for abused young women to regain self-confidence.

Website: www.wgt.ch

UKRAINE

This year’s theme—justice—proved to be very relevant for our people. The theme of justice is always acute in all countries, especially in poor ones. Because of the war in the east of our country, we have plenty of homeless people who had to leave their homes and move to other cities. Our communities are doing our best to collect food, clothes and money to help them.

The World Day of Prayer united all of us because we have similar problems and can understand the Filipino people very well. This made our prayers more sincere and thus more efficient.

The World Day of Prayer united all of us because we have similar problems and can understand the Filipino people very well. This made our prayers more sincere and thus more efficient.

Latin America



ARGENTINA

The WDP community is where we most see ecumenism flourish. We work on the preparations for the service all year long by having monthly meetings and a retreat, and by reaching out to remote communities. Prayer unites people and we always work with the WDP motto “Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action” in mind. We seek God and teach others to seek him as well for true justice will come from Him. We also pray for world peace every Monday.

One of our services was interrupted by excessive heat and a sudden blackout, and in that moment we saw ourselves reflected in what the women of the Philippines face every day. We prayed and vowed to work towards defending the rights of women and, above all, to combat gender violence. We chose to support an organization dedicated to helping those living with disabilities.

BRAZIL

The celebration was inspiring and it reminded us of our mission to serve God, who is of justice, and does not tolerate injustice. The theme and service from the Philippine women showed us that the structure of economic inequality is everywhere. However, we see that there are ways to combat this that are simple yet important.

We learned about the traditional cultural practice of *dagyaw* as a way of working within a community in an equitable way, where all can benefit from the harvest. It is a good way to build and maintain a community that has compassion and respect among residents. Rice was distributed during the worship and it served as a symbol of justice that sustains our hope and our commitment, inspiring us to continue fighting injustices despite the difficulties.

Website: www.dmoracao.comunidades.net

CHILE

We felt we were the “Filipino voice in Chile.” Even though we are from different cultures, we felt close to our Filipino sisters as we share common experiences in terms of injustice and lack of love in this globalized world. We still have family farms, but we also have agriculture production in the hands of the powerful. The seeds are being monopolized by this powerful sector who wants to appropriate the distribution and storage of those fruits that are the future food of our people. It is a matter of food security. The problems that the Filipino people suffer are not exclusive to them. We are also being “globalized,” so in praying we are creating a spiritual force to continue fighting together.

Facebook: DMO Chile



COSTA RICA

We invested time in gathering the groups together to creatively study and prepare the services. It enriched ecumenical relations and build capacity of the committee. We prepared dramas about situations of injustice and how to respond to it. The space was decorated as our Filipino sisters suggested bringing us closer to the writer country. There were three children services in which the children wore harvesting hats and bore the Philippine flag as they participated in the readings.

The sister who delivered the sermon in Limon called our attention to the

importance of raising our voices for our rights. As we face physical and social exclusion we are to work together, in unity, for the betterment of our communities. For example, advocating for women leadership in decision making in the church and in our community, or for protection to Nicaraguan migrant workers in Costa Rica.

CUBA

We had an interesting team working experience. We had to explain to some Filipino residents in Cuba that by highlighting the problems in the country we are able to pray for transformation. This

exchange made us value the importance of entering into a dialogue with people from the writer country in our communities. Their participation and assistance made for a more fulfilling service.

One of the most exciting results of the program was the renewal of leadership as young women engaged in the coordinating teams in their province. With that we will promote campaigns for NO violence against children, and we will use the art to reach out to families in vulnerable situation. We also committed to not limit the prayer to one day, and to continue the material and spiritual support to women in Cuba.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The service space was decorated as the Philippine women suggested, creating an inviting atmosphere. We especially made sure to have oil, which we know is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who comforts us and reminds us of all things. On our altar we also had water as the symbol of life and cleanliness, rice, the symbol of food in our country, a cross as a symbol of redemption, and a candle as a symbol of light.

The parable really highlighted the social justice theme and reminded us that our God is a God of justice. The story



is an invitation from Him to the whole world to practice justice with one another. The issues faced by some of the Filipino women are issues we also face, including devastation by natural disasters, such as hurricanes. We must remember we are all united.

GUATEMALA

For us, the service was a call to reflect on whether we are being unfair to other people. In Guatemala there is a feeling that there is no justice at the social and economic level and laws are not implemented. We focused on these issues and lifted them up in prayer.

A Filipino woman who has lived in our country for 10 years was very surprised to see so many women around the world gathered to pray for her country. She learned many things that she was not aware of like the politics, the exploitation of children, and the suffering of women. We want to follow up on educating about migration. Migration is not a crime. We are connecting with an organization dealing with children who have been deported back to their countries.



HONDURAS

Even though it seems that women are beaten constantly in all spheres of their life, we rise and face it. That is how we felt identified with the situation of women in the Philippines. Their voices in the service impacted the participants and this simple activity in our small group makes us feel that we can do something and that somehow it will affect the mechanism of injustices.

In Itibucá, the worship service and children's program are integrated. It is

a small group and it is very hard to form an ecumenical group that brings together catholic and evangelical. We are stressing to the members of the group to keep informed about women's situation locally and globally, so we can continue to lift them up on our personal prayers.

MEXICO

Each day God gives us blessings and provides us with everything we need. We must be grateful that God never leaves us. Everything as a whole is the fullness of God's love for each one of us.

Every WDP celebration gives us the sense of unity in the presence of God. The situations faced by the Filipino women are familiar to us; therefore we do not feel disconnected with their pain. During the service, we divided ourselves into small groups, and reflected on the life of the Filipinos based on the photos we received. How does it relate to us? How can we support one another? Some suggested actions were sharing resources, visiting the sick, supporting families with children, and sharing the love of God.



NICARAGUA

We welcomed a new sister this year and she was overwhelmed by the love and acceptance she found at the celebration. We encouraged her to share the WDP service in her church. It is our hope to bring more women and churches to the WDP community. For women attending WDP for the first time, it is a very special experience.

During the service, it was mentioned the story of a woman in Nicaragua, who was thrown into a bonfire by her pastor on the assumption that she was 'possessed by the demons.' This had created a commotion in Nicaragua and church women. Then it was proposed that we do something like promote unity and human rights education so women can fight for their rights and resist injustices even when practiced by church leaders.

PANAMA

This year, women used a globe, putting their hands on the Philippines while making powerful prayers,

During the service, we divided ourselves into small groups, and reflected on the life of the Filipinos based on the photos we received. How does it relate to us?

clamoring for solutions to the problems and necessities of the country.

We used a game to show how unequal wealth distribution impacts people. There is a story of a man who owned 90% of all property. We used chairs to represent his possessions. Those without chairs had to stand, while "the man" had almost all of the chairs. This game showed how the minority benefits while the majority suffers in various ways. People are suffering from hunger, sickness, violence, and other social problems.

Some of our women have visited communities and provided medical assistance, helping children, pregnant

women, and adults that live in places with little resources. We suggested making an appeal to get other women to join (preferably young women) in the urgent need.

PARAGUAY

We have a weekend long retreat-workshop at a camp site every year. There the writer country is made known, the material, and the bible studies are reviewed, seven months ahead of the day of prayer. Women all over the country participate in anticipation of the worship service. This retreat has been taking place for the last 30 years. There is a scholarship program that allows women who have not been able to attend this annual retreat come and get informed. Through this we are able to spread awareness about WDP and the issues the writer country is experiencing. We found many similarities between what women in the Philippines and women in our country suffer: injustice, discrimination, and lack of work. We must begin to openly discuss these issues with one another.



During the service it was proposed that we help one community in the capital that suffered a flood, and whose members were about to return to their homes. To do this, their homes needed to be fixed and cleaned. Women who lived nearby, or relatively close, decided to form a squad of aid and cleaning work, which operated on several occasions. It is important to help others in their time of need.

Facebook: dmo.paraguay

URUGUAY

Reports from different celebrations across the country reflected different interpretations of the theme: the emphasis on justice and equality, the concepts of time, human ways of measuring time, the quality of God's time, and the need to share opinions. One person said, "I found it impossible to accept the parable as an image of the Kingdom of God. Thanks to our study it 'caught' me and now I love it."



It is still an adventure and a motive of special joy to perceive the newness of ecumenical contacts in this occasion. Celebrating together intensifies our sensitivity for "others." It helps us to come out of our own spiritual bubble. It makes us aware of the fact that the world we live in offers so many diversities; it helps us to overcome the barriers which separate us from spaces of spirituality that used to be "forbidden spaces."

VENEZUELA

We had three main, successful, services in our country! Our committee is full of excellent ecumenical collaborators who all participate with enthusiasm and positive energy, making for a wonderful celebration. Every year we feel strengthened in the Lord knowing that so many countries are united for a single cause. We feel the strength not only by praying with the women of the Philippines but with the other women from around the world who have, without a doubt, experienced or know of the issues we lift up in worship.

During the preparations in Caracas, we visited the Philippines Consulate in order to expand on the information given to us by WDP Philippines. We spoke to someone who shared their knowledge on the situations Filipinos are facing within and outside their borders. This encounter along with the worship service written by our Filipino sisters made for a truly enriching experience.

Middle East



EGYPT

This year's theme had a two-fold impact: (1) It has led some to do something positive to help eliminate social injustices and (2) It has incited many attendees to start examining their own lives, to see if they have been unjust to others.

In Egypt, a major attack had just been launched in Sinai against all Christians who had to flee, penniless and deprived of everything they possess. Most of them took refuge in churches in Ismaelia. We sent relief to help the refugees in these churches. It felt that many of the Filipino needs and prayer requests were not exclusively Filipino, but were actually shared by the people of Egypt.

The children were excited to dress like Filipinos, and enjoyed looking at the map of the Philippines and learning about that country. More than one child asked: "What games do Filipino children play?"



Website: <http://www.bethlehem-manuel.com>

LEBANON

Through the service we learned about the lives of women, the challenges they face, and how similar they are to our own.

There are many Filipino women living in our country working as domestic helpers. Sometimes they are treated unfairly and this service opened our eyes to the situation we face right in our homes. In one of our celebrations, three Filipino women participated. One sang the Lord's Prayer in her

native tongue and the other two read in the worship service. It was an emotional experience having them participate and they were grateful to have been included.

More than 150 children were gathered from five different churches to celebrate and pray for the children of the Philippines. The lesson of the day was about having compassion and sharing what we have with others.

PALESTINE

We learnt that God compensates everybody equally, contrary to systems and governments. The Gospel reading prompted us to reflect on the unjust conditions in our country Palestine. Sharing the plight of our sisters in the Philippines brings us closer in the WDP movement.

Being in an area of conflict ourselves, we show solidarity with any country that suffers from natural, social, or other problems through letters and



TURKEY



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

statements and sharing information with those around us. We write special prayers for the regions: Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Palestine/Israel so that peace can prevail. We have condemned all forms of violence and terror that lead to the deaths of innocent people and we are very much concerned about refugee issues all around the world.

Thank you, Philippine Sisters.

TUNISIA

We were deeply touched to read of the difficulties faced by our sisters in the Philippines. The text reflected the strength of their faith to face up to these challenges and increase hope for better days ahead. Unfortunately, we didn't get as far as suggesting actions, but we were certainly impacted by the stories of struggle to overcome unfair practices, perhaps most poignantly those of domestic workers, which is also an issue in Tunisia.

During the service, the Anglican committee provided the music, much of it in Arabic, and this was a very rewarding contribution to the joint service.



TUNISIA

There was good attendance by younger Christian adults, although (as is often the case) the fact that the WDP celebration 2017 was on the first Friday of Lent (when many attend Stations of the Cross) was an impediment to the attendance of Catholics.

TURKEY

The theme highlighted the justice of God, the acceptance of God for everyone, and the generosity of God. This helped us focus to become like God. We used Turkish songs in the service, and there was a huge group of Filipinos praying together with us.

Being in Turkey, which is a multicultural country, the western and eastern churches learn from each other when we work together in our WDP Community. Of course there are challenges (different languages, different cultures,

different dominations), but the challenges become a joy for us. We gather every year in a different church (western or eastern), and we learn a lot from the different ways of worship, knowing that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Despite having a large migrant Filipino population here in the UAE, we had very few people attending our service. Time off is very difficult for migrant workers, and Friday is a weekend when most Filipinos would have been working. Locally, we committed to find ways to help those Filipinos who are struggling, working away from family and friends and living hard lives economically. Usually their wages are sent back home to care for ageing parents and educating their children left behind.

We have 44 congregations that meet in our church premises, from approximately 20 different nations. Communication is a big challenge. It takes time and commitment to understand other cultures, and for them to understand you. The greatest joy is when you do, and you successfully work and worship together.

Pacific



AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

The theme was very well received. We have many hundreds of Filipino people working here. Many have left their families behind and are working to gain a better life for them. At one service, a woman told of the difficulties of being a single parent after her husband left the Philippines to work, and before she and her children were able to join him. We lifted up the need for support and welcome for those who are far from home. Many in attendance felt empathy for lonely people and hoped to be more welcoming.

Children took several parts in the WDP service like dramatizing the Gospel reading, but also participating in the children's program held at church schools or Sunday schools.

Website: www.worlddayofprayer.co.nz

AUSTRALIA

We had great children's participation. They read the young people's parts and assisted with handing



out service sheets, taking up collections, and helping with morning teas. Some sang in the service, or took part dancing and making decorations. One suburban center hosted 23 primary school students who mimed the Gospel story. By all accounts this was a great partnership between the organizers and the local schools.

Several service centers advised that attendances were up—possibly due to the local Filipino women attending. One country service reported that their town has a strong connection with the Philippines. 'Each year one or two groups work with a Church and Orphanage in Cebu. Many younger members have also participated in Mission trips to Manila as part of their Senior Years at the local Christian School.'

Website: www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org

COOK ISLANDS

At first we were asking ourselves why the women of the Philippines

chose the theme "Am I Being Unfair to You?" Then we realized that they had been treated unfairly, and that it was happening here in the Cook Islands too. There were many constructive discussions held on the theme, and a lot of stories being told.

This year's theme really carved a pathway for all of us to reflect and go back to the Bible. The Bible verse from Numbers 27 was well and clearly dramatized on the night of the worship. Dramatizing the Gospel of Mark attracted those that are in the work force. The congregation was all in silence and discussion continued even after the service. Here in the Cook Islands our ecumenical relationship is getting stronger and stronger every year.

FIJI

We came together from different denominations to deeply reflect on the theme. The general atmosphere was that each one present asked their neighbor, "Am I being unfair to you?" We felt that we should reach out to the Pacific and to Asia



COOK ISLANDS



KIRIBATI

with our fight against climate change and ask the big countries, “Are we being unfair to you?” Like the Philippines, we are also facing the impact of climate change. We are in solidarity with the Filipino people.

Child abuse, child protection, and climate change were three issues that were identified as areas of action lift up on our coming together. Our children participated in the drama and action song and dressed up in Philippine dress, making it a lovely celebration.

KIRIBATI

Women and children are seen as victims and the most vulnerable people in the stories given by Meryln, Tiria, and Esther. “Am I being unfair to you” pinpoints exactly those people with power. However, this brings us together to share the challenges faced by children and women in the stories told, and at the same time empower us in a way that it affirms our faith in knowing that God is good all the time and is within us always.

Our government is working hard to develop its training manual on child protection, as is our church. The women’s fellowship has visited all the



NEW CALEDONIA

islands to train women and others in parenting skills, child protection, budgeting skills, gardening—relating them to biblical texts. We hope it will help families work for their own living.

NEW CALEDONIA

Although we are a small country we had very successful celebrations with about 16,000 participants. Currently, the participants are members of the protestant churches but we are actively inviting and working on sharing the WDP movement with members of the Catholic Church. During the service we felt the presence of the Holy Spirit with strong emotion and love for the Filipino people. We experience many of the same issues our Filipino sisters lifted up. Through WDP we are able to learn about the situations women face

across the world, and we discover that we are not alone. There are many injustices and we must be strong women and turn towards justice when the opportunity arises. Under God we are all the same, for he has no preferences and sees no differences.

SAMOA

Throughout the country, services were held ecumenically in the villages. After hearing the voices of the Filipino women crying for education and economic justice, we pray that the government leaders prioritize the needs of poor families. Church leaders also must do the same. We have to inspire and move ourselves and others into action. We need to be seeds of justice that flourish to bring hope to the world.

We realized that solidarity is our source of strength. Ecumenical relationships bring happiness in the mystery of seedtime and the joy of harvest, which is a time of plenty. It inspires us to continue despite the obstacles, and to bring hope to the world by using our hands to continue planting and nurturing.

Leading Together



CENTROAMÉRICA

Como parte del seguimiento al fortalecimiento de los comités nacionales en Centroamérica iniciado en 2015, realizamos otro taller en Costa Rica con 21 mujeres de 9 provincias. Eso resultó en 9 celebraciones en 2017 bajo el tema del DMO Filipinas con un total de 302 participantes en Costa Rica.

En Guatemala, el taller del 2015 llevó a la formación del comité nacional y la realización del segundo Taller de Fortalecimiento en Centroamérica con 39 mujeres participantes siendo 5 provenientes de El Salvador, 3 de Costa Rica y 31 de diferentes

provincias de Guatemala. Muchas de las participantes por primera vez escuchaban del movimiento. Se quedaron asombradas por la variedad y calidad del material del que se dispone y salieron animadas a llevar a sus congregaciones y país todo el aprendizaje del DMO y en particular todo lo aprendido de Filipinas.

El tema “¿Acaso te estoy tratando Injustamente?” es muy importante para la región pues la realidad del desempleo y las injusticias son cotidianas. Se trabajó el tema de la trata de mujeres y sus efectos en las víctimas. La invisibilidad y silencio alrededor de esta realidad y el aumento de casos en la región, en particular en

Guatemala nos han impactado profundamente.

La participación de las mujeres indígenas de Guatemala nos ha llevado a proveer interpretación del taller a sus idiomas. La creatividad y comunión nos permitieron sentir el espíritu de Dios de una manera especial. Todo eso contribuyó para que en Guatemala se dieran 16 celebraciones con 428 participantes.

Las mujeres Salvadoreñas, muy animadas, llegaron a su país a organizarse para hacer las celebraciones. Aunque sin un comité nacional formado, las representantes de las Iglesia Bautista y Luterana lograron realizar 5 cultos



en diferentes regiones con participación de 300 personas. Esperan en el 2018 poder tener un Taller de Fortalecimiento y preparatorio del DMO de Surinam, y lograr formar un comité.

Encontrar maneras de enfrentar las injusticias, marginación, explotación que viven las mujeres en Filipinas y en nuestros países es todo un reto. Nos animó la manera como crean formas de solidaridad y apoyo ante las necesidades. Seguimos con mucho entusiasmo para los talleres preparatorios del 2018 y buscando maneras de orar y actuar.



Agradecemos a Dios y al CIDMO quienes han hecho posible que podamos fortalecer el DMO en la región.

Informe y fotos por la representante regional de América Latina—Rebeca Cascante.

The Latin America Regional Representative, Rebeca Cascante, reports on the Strengthening National Committee workshops with women from Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador, supported by WDPIC Funds. The activities have resulted in the formation of National Committees, increasing of number of celebrations and participation, better understanding of the WDP movement, and awareness of women's situation to inspire prayer and action.

Buscando sabedoria para cuidar da criação Deus International Committee Meeting Report

BY ROSÂNGELA S. OLIVEIRA



Seeking wisdom to care for God's Creation in Portuguese, written on the conference hall banner, set the context of the International Committee Meeting of World Day of Prayer, held in Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil from August 20-27, 2017. The theme was an invitation to collectively commit our prayer and action towards environment care, which is the focus of the 2018 WDP program written by the Suriname committee.

We had an intense and participatory program. It was collaboratively led by

delegates, guests, and the executive committee members. We were 188 participants representing 81 countries. We came together to continue building the WDP movement and make decisions about the international leadership and programs for the next term.

WDP Brazil as hosting country welcomed the participants and gave us a sense of the three frontier states (Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina) with a cultural presentation by a group of young dancers and musicians from Paraguay.



Young dancers from Paraguay



Silvia Regina Lima e Silva



Sarah de Roure



Dora Arce Valentin

The opening celebration was based on the Suriname worship service with the theme “All God’s creation is very good!” Silvia Regina Lima e Silva introduced the Bible Study based on Genesis 1:2.1-4 during the meditation moment and concluded the study the next day. The hermeneutic perspective that crossed the reflection was hope. The hope proclaimed, affirmed, and experienced in the midst of pain, the denial of life, and in the midst of chaos.

Sarah de Roure gave a presentation on the environmental context and communities in Brazil, telling the stories of the indigenous women in the Amazon and the indiscriminate exploitation of the rainforest through predatory economic practices such as mining, large-scale logging, water and soil contamination by livestock and soybean plantations.

The WDP program is grounded in the Bible, and that always makes the

Bible study sessions a key moment in our formation process. Besides Silvia Silva, there were two other theologians guiding the Bible Study. Dora Arce Valentin chose the text of Proverbs 31:10-31 to challenge WDP women to see the potential that this movement can represent globally and locally when wisdom inspires transformation.

Ulrike Bechmann led the Bible study on Luke 14:15-24 introducing the



Ulrike Bechmann



Ancestral wisdom: land, identity and food security workshop



Facilitators of young women leading the unity in prayer and actions workshop



Organizing the Reformation & WDP women's presentation

theme of the 2019 program written by WDP Slovenia: "Come—Everything is Ready." There is a moment of justice—when the poor is empowered to come to the table and the rich to be changed. The slave is an enabler of the transformation and we can ask ourselves, how can WDP be an enabler?



There were two set of workshops. One day the focus was on the theme of the meeting, and the next day was focused on ways to renew and strengthen the WDP movement. Also, twelve small thematic groups were previously formed on a variety of

topics to allow for meaningful conversations that would impact WDP action and response in the communities.

A community building session invited the participants to share and pray together. A choir was formed by the

participants who sang new songs with the help of the song leaders. Plus, we celebrated the meeting of women from the Reformation and WDP women, telling the story of women's leadership in the past and today. A prayer room where any participant could spend some quite time praying and meditating was set and available at all times.

We are collecting the outlines, presentations, or reports of each activity, and they will be available for download on the WDPIC website. We expect you to use those resources in your community and WDP committee.



Thursday in Black Campaign!



WDPIC Executive Committee members, staff and guest



Newly elected WDPIC Executive Committee



On Thursday, we wore black in solidarity with the Thursday in Black campaign to say no to rape and violence. It was powerful! We will bring that awareness to our WDP committee and community.

Finally, we want to inform you of the newly elected members of the executive committee and the new calendar of themes and writer countries.



Chairperson Laurence Gangloff (France) Treasurer Susan Jackson-Dowd (USA)	Africa Henriette Mbatchou (Cameroon) Joyce Larko Steiner (Ghana)	Asia Moumita Biswas (India) Vino Schubert (Sri Lanka)	Caribbean/North America Ruth V.E. Phillips (Barbados) Lauren Wilks (Canada)
Europe Emmanuelle Bauer (Luxembourg) Senka Sestak Peterlin (Croatia)	Latin America Rebeca Cascante (Costa Rica) Esther Susana Renner (Brazil)	Middle East Maral Barzkian Haidostian (Lebanon) Nora Carmi (Palestine)	Pacific Vicki Marney (Australia) Henrica Nio Marona (Cook Islands)



In God's beautiful garden building just and inclusive communities workshop



Outgoing WDPIC Committee



Newly elected WDPIC Committee

The working group on themes and writer countries revised all the submissions received, and based on the areas of concern of the worldwide movement, the urges of our time, the basic structure and capacity of the national committees, the geographic balance, and with prayers, they have designed the following program:

On the last day, the outgoing and newly elected executive members met to pass along information about their region and to encourage the new leadership. Also, the delegates of the selected countries met with the new chairperson and executive director to have a brief overview of the writing process and timeline.

The closing worship service is the moment of entrusting the new leadership with their responsibility and prayers for guidance. The offering collected was dedicated to the Fund for Tomorrow, which enables young women and national committees with limited resources to be part of the international meeting. The committees in Greece, Lebanon, Palestine, Sweden, and Uruguay gave their offering in honor of a leader in their country. Their story will be posted on the WDPIC website.

2022—*I know the plans I have for you*, by WDP England/Wales/Northern Ireland

2023—*I have heard about your faith*, by WDP Taiwan

2024—*I beg you... bear with one another in love*, by WDP Palestine

2025—*I made you wonderful*, by WDP Cook Islands

2026—*I will give you rest: come*, by WDP Nigeria





WEAVING TOGETHER THE CONVERSATIONS

We, the participants, traveled from all corners of God's given home—the earth. We were women and young women from the seven regions of the world. It was an intergenerational conversation!

- ✓ We came from the Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions. It was an ecumenical dialogue!
- ✓ We shared our stories, we heard the pain of God's creation, we listened to God's words and as women of faith we grow stronger in our commitment for transformation. It was a prayer and action moment!
- ✓ In the midst of the environmental crisis, climate change, exploitation, violence, and xenophobia, we insisted on the goodness of creation. Goodness to be recovered through our prophetic-transforming action. "All God's creation is very good!"
- ✓ Focused on the life giving strategies of Quilombolas, in Brazil, or Maroon, in Suriname, we got inspiration in women's leading role in the transmission of knowledge and community values to tie together food security and sustainable local development. We learned with each other!
- ✓ In the Mayan cosmology, forests and lands are sacred, and the earth is the mother where the home and garden are for the community's co-existence and collective work. We are to take care of our mother earth!
- ✓ The parallels between the destruction of the Earth and the evils of anthropocentrism with oppression, racism and discrimination, came out when confronted by eco-feminist theology. We see it clear now!
- ✓ Over fishing! Plastic shopping bags, fertilized seeds, carbon-monoxide generators, wood and charcoal fuel, stone crushing, waste disposal, deforestation, non-ecological office supplies, human trafficking—all came into light as we named the ecological context of our communities. Women are boycotting, campaigning,

recycling, gardening, petitioning, rallying, changing life styles, advocating, educating, shopping responsibly, holding vigils to raise awareness, even abstaining from eating fish during certain seasons. We are for environmental justice!

- ✓ Humans move from one place to another, and sometimes they are called refugees and they are living in camps, unemployed, subject to violence, and always vulnerable. Inclusiveness! What a witness, we engage with our churches and non-governmental organizations.
- ✓ One young woman from each of the seven regions lead the unity in prayer and action through art, social media, and song to reflect on their experience and to emphasize the value of those practices to reach out to young people for an intergenerational movement. A friendship across the globe flourished!
- ✓ Japanese women wear kimonos in hope of peace and reconciliation, including amongst women in the region where the violence of war has left a wound. In a small group, stories of conflict and violence were shared. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called daughters of God.
- ✓ In the exchange about women leadership roles in the churches, we could see that women are the backbone of the churches in their respective parishes and homes, even when the patriarchal structure limits the public role of women in worship and hierarchal functions. Women's empowerment is still a blessing to churches!
- ✓ Children's rights are human rights and it should be the focus of the children's ministry. This is being acknowledged as we nurture and care for children. Church, home, and government agencies must work together to transform the life of children.
- ✓ In a pilot project with young women, a research demonstrated that less structured and interactive event, where young women can contribute their knowledge and is relationship driven, may be more successful than traditional lecturing meetings. Keep that in mind!



- ✓ The environmental crisis is also a crisis of global justice. God's justice always meant loving and sacrificial self-giving. We, as Christians cannot be silent. We live with the hope and belief that people have the means, and increasingly, the will to focus on justice, peace, and integrity of creation.
- ✓ To recycle is to give a new use to objects, thus reducing the consumption of resources that may degrade the planet. We may use the way we do WDP activities to educate and campaign for climate justice. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! Simple as that!
- ✓ What a precious opportunity to listen the writer countries! Philippines, Suriname, Slovenia and Zimbabwe, each one gave a glimpse into the theme and the situation of their country. We are enthusiastic about the programs!
- ✓ A question to Katherina von Bora—Can you see any similarities between the women in the Reformation Movement and the women in the Word Day of Prayer? She may say that the Reformation Movement rediscovered the value of women and we can add that through *Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action* for peace and justice, WDP women live out solidarity.



A GLIMPSE OF THE PROGRAM AND LEADERSHIP

Talking wisdom and care @ 10

- ✓ *Mujeres indígenas y el cuidado por la tierra*, Bianka Paz Carrera (Guatemala)
- ✓ *Reciclaje como acto de cuidado*, Coromoto Jimenez de Salazar (Venezuela)
- ✓ *Women leading change*, Catherine Akale (Cameroon)
- ✓ *Kimono dressing for peace*, Maymi Hara and Megumi Maejima (Japan)
- ✓ *Empowering Orthodox women*, Saramma Varghese (India)
- ✓ *Reaching out to children*, Janice Soyer-Delaney (Trinidad and Tobago)
- ✓ *WDP pilot project with young women*, Catherine Mackeil (Canada)
- ✓ *Welcoming refugees*, Inge-Lise Lollike and Lene Johnson (Denmark)
- ✓ *Ecumenical response to crisis*, Marija Parnicky (Serbia), Senka Peterlin (Croatia)

- ✓ *Situation of Roma people*, Nataša Egić (Slovenia)
- ✓ *What is happening in Middle East?* Nora Carmi (Palestine)
- ✓ *Community's responses to climate change*, Fetaiai Pepa Mona and Elizabeth Lanuola Asiata (Samoa)

Workshops Focused on the Theme and WDP

- ✓ *What is climate justice?* Dora Arce-Valentin (Cuba)
- ✓ *Ancestral wisdom: Land, identity and food security*, Marilia Alves Schüller (Brazil)
- ✓ *In God's Beautiful Garden Building Just and Inclusive Communities*, Moumita Biswas (India)
- ✓ *Connecting worship and prayerful action*, Marilyn Pagan-Banks (USA)
- ✓ *Young women leading the unity in prayer and actions*, Tlamele Kebatenne (Botswana), Hungreiphy Zimik Awungshi (India), Lauren Wilks (Canada) Sona Galsty (Greece), Ruth Trueba (Cuba), Sally Ibrahim Ajar (Palestine), and Anne Lizqina Lehaul (Tonga).

- ✓ *Finding women's voice in the Bible Study*, Ulrike Bechmann and Irene Trokarski (Germany)
- ✓ *Promovendo DMO no Brasil*, Leda Witter (Brazil)
- ✓ *Talking to writer countries from 2017 to 2020*, Maral Haidostian (Lebanon), Dorothy Castro (Philippines), Rosana Pindon (Suriname), Tanja Povsnar (Slovenia), and Sylvia Marowa (Zimbabwe)
- ✓ *Women Leading History: Reformation and WDP*, Grietje Couperus (Brazil), Christina Takatsu Winnischofer (Brazil), Lore Raudonat (Germany)

PRAYERFUL ACTIONS

- ✓ Support the communities by disseminating the information that communities want to share about the threats upon them and their environment;
- ✓ Promote global awareness by engaging with communities, building solidarity, participating and strengthening the alliances between the Churches and women's groups;
- ✓ Raise support by promoting connections between different communities with common environmental challenges;
- ✓ Wear black on Thursday to say NO to rape and gender based violence.

A WORD FROM THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON



Outgoing chairperson Corinna Harbig with elected chairperson, Laurence Gangloff

Every International Committee meeting a new chairperson, from the Pool of current and available regional representatives, is elected. I, Corinna Harbig, pass to Laurence Gangloff the light for guidance and wisdom in the role of chairperson from 2017 to 2022.

At the closing worship service, I reflected on Jesus' commissioning of the disciples, highlighting three aspects most meaningful to WDP women.

First, we as women of faith are called and empowered to follow the footsteps of Jesus. We all are God's creation "regardless the color of our skin, our denomination or religion, or if we are young, a mother or grandmother, married or single, lesbian or bisexual, we are valued and we are wisdom. We are God's creation!"

Second, we as women of faith are empowered to pray together. "It is a powerful prayer because it leads us to change our view and open our eyes towards the world. Our *Informed Prayer* leads us to see the destruction of creation, the injustice, the gap between the rich and the poor, the violence, and the chaos in God's good creation."

Lastly, we as women of faith are empowered to act. "We are empowered to reconstruct communities, empowered to form new communities, empowered to act together for justice and peace."



WDP at a Glance



World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice on every first Friday of March and throughout the year.

The 2017 Journal is based on the 99 country reports received, even though more countries have promoted the program. It is estimated that 95,829 services were held in 113 languages, including versions in Braille and large print. The worship service's attendance was estimated at around 1,618,869 persons. The celebrations were held in churches, schools, hospitals, prisons, convents, and elderly homes.

In a few countries, the worship service was broadcasted on national TV, radio, and via live stream. WDP activities were announced in the city or church's newspapers, posters, fliers, Facebook, website, and Twitter. Around 24 activities, especially for children and youth, were held in many schools and churches across the seven regions.

HOW WILL WDP OFFERINGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES AND AROUND THE WORLD?

WDP Philippines will ecumenically support training on risk reduction in communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural/human made disasters; enable young women leadership; promote adult education in the rural indigenous communities; sponsor livelihood training for urban poor women and build an organizational capacity for Church Women United-Philippines and WDP ecumenical campaigns.

WDP National/Regional Committees develop their partnership directly with projects locally or abroad, including in the Philippines. They have reported that the offering will be dedicated to:



Empowering women, children, youth, and people with disabilities through education, mentoring, shelter, food programs, trauma counseling, hospital care, orphanages, and prison visitations;



Sustaining the socio-political commitment for women's empowerment and race/ gender justice; supporting migrant children, people displaced by war or natural/human made disasters;



Providing care and medical supplies for people living with HIV and AIDS, cancer, drug addiction, diabetes and dementia; and victims of domestic violence and human trafficking;



Promoting Christian education for children and youth and women's theological formation; sponsoring programs of ecumenical council women's desks and Bible Society;



Building organizational sustainability of the WDP in local communities, in the writer countries, and provide for the regional and international coordination of the movement. Tell the WDP story by honoring a leader through the Fund for Tomorrow.

WDP 1927–2021

THEME TIMELINE



The timeline of World Day of Prayer Worship service themes and writers is based on Blessed, the art painting, done by Chantal E.Y. Bentel, for the 2015 Bahamas celebration. The poster tells the story of women's global concern and theological approach through a movement of *Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action.*

Use the poster to tell the story of WDP in your community! Invite the children to find the writer country on the map! Ask the young people to identify the social justice issues on the timeline! Envision new themes and writers that ecumenically welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

To order the poster, please email admin@worlddayofprayer.net. The cost of the posters is as follows:

1 to 10 posters = \$ 5.50 each poster plus shipping;

11 to 99 posters = \$ 4.50 each poster plus shipping;

over 100 posters = \$ 3.50 each poster plus shipping.

EDITORIAL TEAM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The WDP Journal is an annual publication of the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). It is based on the Annual Reports written by the WDP National/Regional Committees. It offers an overview of the global movement from its local context, and includes expressions of prayer and action based on the annual theme. WDPIC promotes the sharing of information, therefore the Journal can be freely downloaded from the WDPIC website, and it can be reproduced provided acknowledgment is given to the source of information.

Editorial

Rosângela S. Oliveira (Staff)

Samantha Figueroa (Staff)

Jessica Tulloch (Consultant)

Photos

WDP Committees and WDPIC

Design

Laura Lee (Consultant)

Cover Artwork

Rowena "Apol" Laxamana-Sta.Rosa (WDP Philippines Committee)

World Day of Prayer International Executive Committee

Laurence Gangloff, France (Chairperson)

Susan Jackson-Dowd, USA (Treasurer)

Africa:

Henriette Mbatchou, Cameroon

Joyce Larko Steiner, Ghana

Asia:

Vino Schubert, Sri Lanka

Moumita Biswas, India

Caribbean and North America:

Ruth V.E. Phillips, Barbados

Lauren Wilks, Canada

Europe:

Senka Sestak Peterlin, Croatia

Emmanuelle Bauer, Luxembourg

Latin America:

Rebeca Cascante Gómez, Costa Rica

Esther Susana Renner, Brazil

Middle East:

Maral Barzkian-Haidostian, Lebanon

Nora Carmi, Palestine

Pacific:

Vicki Marney, Australia

Henrica Nio Marona, Cook Islands

See you at the next International Committee Meeting in 2022!

SAVE THE DATE! RAISE FUNDS BY TELLING A WDP STORY!



REGIONAL DELEGATES AND HOST COUNTRY—WDP BRAZIL

SURINAME 2018

All God's Creation is Very Good! *A heri grontapu di Gado meki bun doro, dóro!*

As in the beginning, God created from chaos. But everything that was created found its place in creation. All were related to each other—the earth with the light, the waters with the sky, the tree seeds with the living creatures, and the humankind with God. None could exist without the other, and the source of all was God.

There was goodness in that integrated system of relationships. But essential to that was the commitment to care. And we know that we are failing!

Women from Suriname lift up their voices to remind us that we are caretakers of God's creation! They are bringing to our attention the urgent need for caring at a time when more than 180 countries have signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. A commitment to keep the earth cooler depends on public policies implemented by governments, but also on our personal lifestyle.

As one of our Guiding Principles affirms “prayer is rooted in listening to God and to one another.” Through the worship service, we listen to the multicultural and multi-ethnic people of Suriname. They take us to their communities and through their concerns. History is before our eyes! The flora and fauna are remarkable! The everyday life is weaved into the prayers.

How good is God's creation? That is the question to meditate and respond to with a personal commitment to care for creation. But it can also be an opportunity for the WDP motto “Informed prayer and prayerful action” to be affirmed in the community. What is it that we, as the WDP movement, can do to keep God's creation good?



SLOVENIA 2019

Come—Everything is Ready!

This year the program was written by women in Slovenia, one of the smallest countries in Europe and a pretty young committee in the WDP movement.

At the core of the theme, an invitation—Come. And to enable the response—Everything is ready. Come to praise, thank, and proclaim the kingdom of love.

The invitation is grounded in the parable that Jesus told about a great dinner which was attended by the ones called off the streets, as the ones invited excused themselves. The community formed around the table is not enough to fill the house—there is still room. Who are missing from the table in your community? How would you invite and prepare the feast?

Throughout the worship service, we hear the stories of those who are coming to the table of bread, wine, water, and salt. Their stories reflect the political and economic situation from the time Slovenia was a socialist-communist state to today. Their stories are the voices of the refugee and migrant workers, the mothers, the grandmothers, the wives, and the Roma people. While listening to their stories, we ask for forgiveness for being silent in the face of injustice, and we pray that God open our hearts to compassion and understanding and we leave with a blessing prayer to mutually support one another on the path of freedom, justice, and peace.



For more information about World Day of Prayer please write to:

World Day of Prayer International Committee

475 Riverside Drive Suite 729

New York, NY 10115

USA

Tel: 1-212-870-3049

Email: admin@worlddayofprayer.net/

Facebook: World Day of Prayer—International Committee

To download the Journal, visit our website:

www.worlddayofprayer.net