



People's SONA Opening Prayer

(Delivered by Naida Castro, Chairperson, NEFFCON-IE 07/25/2021)

God of History, Source of Life and Lord of all creation, listen to the cry of your people in the Philippines. Hear our prayer – the prayer of your people in the USA in solidarity with the groaning of your creation in the Philippines. Grant us the blessings we need in our one struggle to defend our common home for the common good.

Behold, your people in the Philippines, especially the poor, who are mercilessly being killed by the regime that has declared war against drugs, but has not caught **the one big time druglord.**

Behold, the incarceration, forced disappearances and deaths of many social activists, human rights defenders, church people working for justice and peace, and peace builders in the Philippines by the regime that has declared war against communism but has cuddled instead the economic plunderers, corrupt politicians, human rights violators and wreckers of the environment.

Behold, the deception of the poor, the thievery of the health funds in the time of the pandemic and the militarization of government responses to the needs of the people and creation by a civilian-military that rules by lies, demagoguery and brute military force.

Behold, the sale of our sovereignty and national patrimony to foreign imperialist nations as they are allowed to claim our Philippine seas and marine resources, exploit our mines and minerals and make our lands and seas military bases of foreign military power by the regime that thrives on foreign debts and military subservience.

Behold, the resistances of the people: they continue to defend life and creation; they persevere in the work for justice, human dignity, rights and welfare; they



persist in asserting our national honor, our national freedom and sovereignty and the integrity of creation at the cost of their lives.

Dear Lord, by your mighty hand deliver us from this godless regime by strengthening our resolve to struggle for our liberation. Help us put an end to this heartless regime by uniting us all in your love and compassion. In your mercy and justice help us rebuild our almost- shattered identity by putting an end to this regime of gutter and baseness.

Tulongan Ninyo po kaming WAKASAN NA itong rehimeng pumapatay ng buhay, dangal at kalayaan ng aming bayan.

Tulongan Ninyo po kaming UMPISAHAN NA ang tunay na pagbabago sa pamamagitan ng pagsulong ng kilusang mapagpalaya ng inyong Sambayanang Pilipino.

“Comfort, comfort, my people,” says the Lord (Is 40:1) The Church people now must reclaim the role of shepherds. Let us be shepherds to each other. Let the poor shepherd each other. Let us all be shepherded by the poor who toil to give us food, clothing and shelter by their sweat and blood; by their suffering and death; and by their very life.

And the Lord says, “Behold, I make all things new! (Rev. 21:5) WAKASAN NA! UMPISAHAN NA!

Amen.