



Ecumenical Women's Forum

Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines -Office of Women Gender Commission * PUEEN - National Council of Churches in the Philippines(NCCP)*Christian Women's Association – United Church of Christ in the Philippines*Women of the Philippine Independent Church * Episcopal Church Women*Board of Women's Work –United Methodist Church* KASIMBAYAN Women's Collective*Diakonia Phils.*Association of Women in Theology(AWIT)*BATIS Center for Women*Federation of Convention Baptist Women's Missionary Societies, Inc.* Asuncion Perez Memorial Center*Moro Christian People's Alliance * Religious of the Good Shepherd – JPIC-Women

March 7, 2020

Statement of the Ecumenical Women's Forum on the International Women's Day March 7, 2020

When women were denied their economic rights and opportunities, the daughters of Zelophehad rose up, engaged the legal system, and claimed their rights for inheritance and economic access (Numbers 27.1-4).

When there was famine gripping the poor Elijah the prophet found an ally with the widow of Zarephath. She rose up against the will of the king, and offered sanctuary to the so-called "enemy" of the state. It was dangerous to defy the king and it was risky to offer radical hospitality to a prophet who had spoken of TRUTH and showed bias to the poor with JUSTICE. The widow of Zarephath was not just generous. Out of her poverty she rose up and shared food and sanctuary to the prophet (1 Kings 17.7-16).

When Mary was pregnant of Jesus, she dared subvert the social order and shouted out her radical acclamation what we call now the Magnificat, to a cruel and unjust empire:

"His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1.50-53).

When women were not considered a force to politics, women rose up and fought for their right to suffrage.

When women were exploited at the workplace, they rose up, staged strikes, shouted for justice. And so we have March 8 as International Women's Day to remember their fight for Bread and Roses.

When the dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law that silenced dissent and suppressed the rights of the people, women rose up and formed the MAKIBAKA, a group of militant women which the dictator considered a threat. Like the Babaylans of old, despite being declared an

illegal organization, women thru MAKIBAKA continued the fight, and relentlessly claimed and asserted that the women's place is in the struggle.

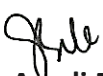
We are women of faith. Today with deeper resolve, we are committed to continue the work of our forebears who decided that to RISE UP is an option and to fight for justice is a work of a spirit-filled life.

We are women of faith. And today we are one with the people calling to end tyranny and oppression.

We rise against the weaponization of the laws that curtail our civil and political rights and put the lives of our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters in peril as they take the option of serving the poor and in pursuing peace based on justice.

We call on the resumption of the Peace Talks between the Government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front. It is important that the covenant signed by both parties are honored in the interest of addressing the root causes of the armed conflict, and to build up a political and economic structure that benefits the poor, protect our sovereignty and guarantee our patrimony.

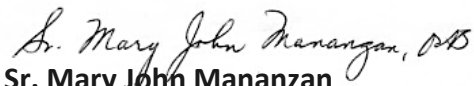
We are women of faith. We commit ourselves to build JUSTICE and PEACE in our land. Like the daughters of Zelophehad, the widow of Zarephath and Mary, we RISE for our people!



Ms. Arceli P. Bile

Women's Desk

National Council of Churches in the Philippines



Sr. Mary John Mananzan

Office of Women and Gender Concerns

Association of Major Religious Superiors in
the Philippines