



*The Lord will give you a sign.
Look, the young woman is with child
and will bear a son,
and shall name him Immanuel (God is with us)
Isaiah 7:14b*

Dear friends,

Here in Korea, *sae-hae-maji* which means 'meeting the rising sun' is an important ritual for many to welcome the new year which is *Sae-Hae* in Korean. Interestingly, *Sae-Hae* literally means *New Sun*. I am getting ready to welcome the *New Sun* for the second time since I started serving as a *Regional Liaison for East Asia from Korea*.

For those of us who follow the Western church's liturgical calendar, however, our new year begins with *Advent*, the season during which we anticipate the birth of *Jesus on Christmas Day*.

Interestingly these two seemingly disparate beginnings seem more connected than we may think since for ages Christians have been singing,

*O radiant light, O sun divine,
Of God the Father's deathless face,
O image of the light sublime
That fills the heav'nly dwelling place.*

*O Son of God, the source of life,
Praise is your due by night and day.
Our happy lips must raise the strain
of your esteem'd and splendid name.*

(Source: [Catholic Book of Worship III #14G](#))

Like the song, I too desperately want radiant light to fill this world that is cloaked in darkness !

Like the song, I too fervently wait for the source of life to be borne in this world where death looms large all around us.

As I write this letter, the Republic of Korea and the United States, are carrying on a joint war drill that involves 240 warplanes including F-35 stealth fighters against potential aggression from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and DPRK is responding by launching missile strikes.

I learned today that according to the mayor of Kyiv, Ukraine, those who are still living in Kyiv are bracing for the "worst winter" since World War II because Russian missile strikes have destroyed Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

*These are only two examples of military conflicts around the world.
Have mercy on us, O God and come to us.*

As we wait for God's coming,

*Let us fall on our knees with our face to the rising sun,
And pray earnestly for a new beginning--the birth of a new humanity
that loves peace.*

*To the manger, let us go to meet the young woman with a child,
To the manger, let us go to welcome the baby Jesus who, in seeking peace,
grew up and lived his life practicing non-violence even unto death.*

*This Christmas, let us draw near the manger where a new life is born,
And sing "I ain't gonna study war no more" as if our life really depends
on it.*

*And let our singing be heard not just in our homes and churches, but also
in the streets and public squares.*

The world will then know that God is with us.

I wish you a very blessed Christmas!

May love, joy, peace and hope, the gifts of Christmas fill your hearts!

With love,

Unzu