

HEART TO HEART REFLECTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING



**COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN- ARCHDIOCESE OF
WASHINGTON, DC
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Pope Francis on Human Dignity

“For each of us is created to love and care for others, and this culminates in the gift of self: No one has greater love than this: to give one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).

“In our relationships with others, we play out our humanity, approaching or moving away from the model of human being desired by God the Father and revealed in his incarnate Son. Therefore, every choice contrary to the realization of God’s project for us is a betrayal of our humanity and renounces that ‘life in abundance’ offered by Jesus Christ.”

Pope Francis on Human Trafficking

Human trafficking happens in every community. That means each of us can do something to stop it. As Pope Francis has stated, “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”

“Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that has become even more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society.”

Opening Song

We Sing For Freedom Lyric Video by John Burland

The song “We Sing for Freedom” was inspired by the life of [St. Josephine Bakhita](#). Her strong faith carried her through slavery and beyond. The entire journey of her life is a remarkable witness to faith. After finding out about her, singer-songwriter [John Burland](#) was deeply moved and inspired to write this song. He wanted “We Sing for Freedom” to be an anthem for freedom with a focus on human trafficking and modern-day slavery. This cause is extremely important and cannot be overlooked. The song also draws on Scripture: **“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free”** (Galatians 5:1).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw4LNRWUgOQ>

Life of Saint Josephine Bakhita

Leader: Let us begin by observing a moment of silence in solidarity with the more than 27 million women, men and children who suffer each day from modern day slavery.

Leader: Each person forced into slavery has a personal story...a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Let us listen to the story of Bakhita, a survivor of human trafficking.

Reader 1: St. Josephine Bakhita was born in southern Sudan in 1869. As a young girl, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Sold and resold in the markets of El Obeid and Karthoum, she was treated brutally by her captors. She did not remember the name she was given by her parents. Bakhita, which means “fortunate one,” was the name given to her by her kidnappers.



Life of Saint Josephine Bakhita

Reader 2: In 1883, she was bought by an Italian diplomat who sent her to Italy to work as a maid for the daughter of a family friend studying with the Canossian Daughters of Charity. It was there that Bakhita came to know about God whom “she had experienced in her heart without knowing” who God was. In 1890, she was baptized and received the name Josephine.

Reader 1: Later, the Italian family came to take their “property” back to Africa. Josephine expressed her desire to stay. When the family insisted she go, she remained firm, later writing: “I am sure the Lord gave me strength at that moment.” With the support of the superior of the Canossian Sisters and the Cardinal of Venice, she won her freedom and later entered the novitiate. For the next 50 years she lived a life of prayer and service as a Canossian Sister before her death in 1947.

Reader 2: St. Josephine was canonized in 2000. She was designated as the patron saint of kidnapped and trafficked persons.

Leader: We hold all impacted by human trafficking in our hearts as we pray together.

Prayer to St. Bakhita

Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering.

Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

Oh St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf

so that they will be released from their chains of captivity.

Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith.

Help all survivors find healing from their wounds.

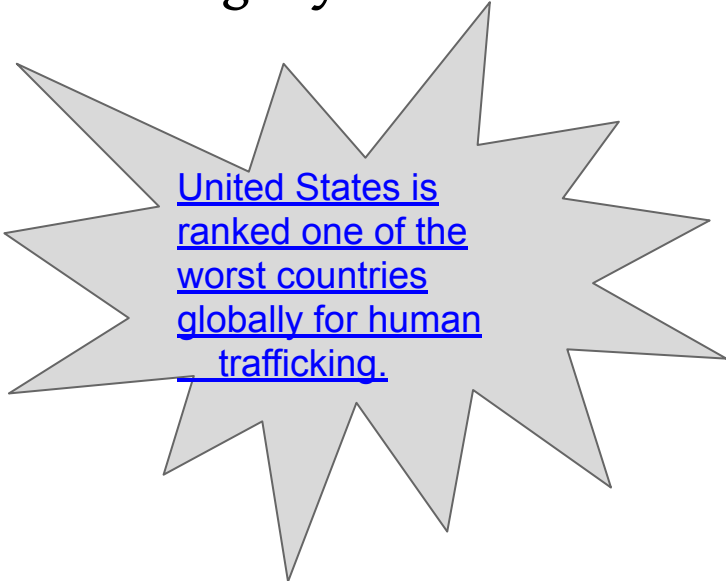
We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

Amen.

Human Trafficking Statistics

2019 Reported Cases

As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human life and seriously oppose human trafficking and modern-day slavery as it violates basic human dignity.



[United States is ranked one of the worst countries globally for human trafficking.](#)

States with Highest Human Trafficking Numbers 2019

1. California
2. Texas
3. Florida
4. New York


Reflection Point

Pope Francis critically remarked, “No one likes to acknowledge that in their own city, region, or nation, there are new forms of slavery, yet we know that this wound afflicts almost all countries. We must then denounce this terrible scourge in all its gravity”.

- *One of every four victims of modern slavery are children.*
- *Often children are being trafficked in plain sight: in their homes and in our schools.*



How can you help protect vulnerable children and teens from sex trafficking?



How can you support the survivors of human trafficking?

Helping Victims of Trafficking

Survivors of human trafficking often suffer severe psychological damage. Their hearts and spirits have been assaulted as much as their bodies. They are ashamed of what has happened to them.

Dear Lord, Your word shows that You bring new joy and hope where previously there was only shame and fear. We ask this for our brothers and sisters who desperately need to be healed.

Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly,
to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the
prisoners,
To announce a year of favor from the LORD
and a day of vindication by our God,
to comfort all who mourn;
To place on those who mourn in Zion a diadem
instead of ashes,
To give them oil of gladness in place of mourning,
a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit.
They will be called oaks of justice,
planted by the LORD to show his glory.

Intercessory Prayer

For Pope Francis, that our Heavenly Father may gift him with deep wisdom as he calls the Church to struggle against the evil of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord,

For the bishops, that they continue to be leaders in the fight against modern day slavery, both domestically and abroad, we pray to the Lord,

For our priests and deacons, that they may boldly proclaim Church teaching on human dignity and the Church's teaching on human trafficking, we pray to the Lord,

For all Catholics, that God inspire them to take action in their local communities to support and protect survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord,

Intercessory Prayer

For those caught up in a situation of slavery, that their perpetrators be brought to justice and that they might find a path to healing, we pray to the Lord,

For the victims and survivors of human trafficking, that they might find the support they need to start a new life, we pray to the Lord,

For the President of the United States, and government leaders: that they continue to work tirelessly to end the bane of slavery that continues to exist in our communities, we pray to the Lord,

For policy makers in our nation, that God grant them the wisdom to enact laws that provide greater protection for victims and survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord,

Prayer for an End to Human Trafficking (Gen Cassani, SSND)

O God, our Words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of children and adults deceived and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor because of human greed.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being transgressed through threats, deception, and force.

Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted.

Make real your promises to fill these our sisters and brothers with love that is tender and good, and send the exploiters away empty handed.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with them, that together we will find ways to freedom that is your gift to all of us. Amen.

Call to Action

Every Catholic has an opportunity to join the fight against human trafficking, whether by educating friends, mentoring vulnerable youth, being a conscious consumer, financially supporting trusted organizations or reporting suspicious activity.

“There have never been as many slaves in the world as there are today,” Gabriella Bottani, the international coordinator of Talitha Kum, reports. “Only together we can break the chain of trafficking and slavery.”

What Can You Do?

Pray for discernment on the actions you can personally take to address human trafficking.

1. Prayer

Offering of Mass, Rosary
Divine Mercy Chaplet
Adoration of the Eucharist
Stations of the Cross
Offering Prayer Bouquet

2. Corporal Work of Mercy, Do an Act of Penance - Fasting & Abstinence

3. Donating to Organizations Working with Survivors of Human Trafficking

4. Conduct Awareness Programs on Human Trafficking in the Parish

5. Have a Brown-bag Lunch & Invite a Speaker to Talk About Human Trafficking

6. Write to Legislators & Government Offices to Enact Laws to Protect Children & Youth & Prosecute Traffickers

7. Join Organizations to End Human Trafficking

8. Use USCCB *Stop Human Trafficking and Exploitation, Protect, Help, Empower, and Restore Dignity* (SHEPHERD)

9. Report suspected human trafficking by calling: National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888 (humantraffickinghotline.org)

Closing Song



Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!



The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun;
we've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.