



HERMANAS DE LA CARIDAD  SISTERS OF CHARITY OF
E VERBO ENCARNADO E INCARNATE WORD

July 2018

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In this special edition of Seeds we are focusing on Human Trafficking because the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is coming up on July 30th. Our Congregation in 2015 took a Corporate Stance Against Human Trafficking, and we continue to work in collaboration with other organizations and congregations to put an end to all forms of human trafficking and support its victims. As a reminder we are part of networks of religious life working to end human trafficking in the United States, Mexico, and Peru. We share with you here prayer and action resources to use in your communities and families on July 30th in solidarity with others around the world who are working to end this form of modern day slavery. Join us in prayer and action to end human trafficking and support survivors. Thank you!

Learn More

UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2018

Human trafficking is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labour and sex. The International Labour Organization estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labour globally. This estimate also includes victims of human trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. While it is not known how many of these victims were trafficked, the estimate implies that currently, there are millions of trafficking in persons victims in the world.

Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims. Children make up almost a third of all human trafficking victims worldwide, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. Additionally, women and girls comprise 71 per cent of human trafficking victims, the report states.

In 2010, the General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, urging Governments worldwide to take coordinated and consistent measures to defeat this scourge. The Plan calls for integrating the fight against human trafficking into the UN's broader programmes in order to boost development and strengthen security worldwide. One of the crucial provisions in the Plan is the establishment of a UN Voluntary Trust Fund for victims of trafficking, especially women and children.

The Trust Fund facilitates effective, on-the-ground assistance and protection to victims of trafficking, through grants to specialized NGOs. In the coming years, it aims to prioritize victims coming from a context of armed conflict and those identified among large refugee and migration flows. It will also focus its assistance to victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, organ removal, forced begging, forced criminality and emerging exploitative purposes (e.g. skin removal, online pornography).

In 2013, the General Assembly held a high-level meeting to appraise the Global Plan of Action. Member States also adopted resolution A/RES/68/192 and designated July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. This resolution declared that such a day was necessary to “raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.”

In September 2015, the world adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and embraced goals and targets on trafficking in persons. These goals call for an end to trafficking and violence against children; as well as the need for measures against human trafficking, and they strive for the elimination of all forms of violence against and exploitation of women and girls.

Another important development is the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, which produced the groundbreaking New York Declaration. Of the nineteen commitments adopted by countries in the Declaration, three are dedicated to concrete action against the crimes of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

‘Act to Protect and Assist Trafficked Persons’

This year the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has chosen ‘act to protect and assist trafficked persons’ as the focus of the World Day. This topic highlights one of the most pressing issues of our time -- the large mixed migration movements of refugees and migrants. The theme puts the spotlight on the significant impact of conflict and natural disasters, as well as the resultant, multiple risks of human trafficking that many people face. It addresses the key issue concerning trafficking responses: that most people are never identified as trafficking victims and therefore cannot access most of the assistance or protection provided.

2018 Human Trafficking Report

The 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report is an essential State Department tool used to shed light on the darkness where modern slavery thrives and to highlight specific steps each government can take to protect victims of human trafficking, prevent trafficking crimes, and prosecute traffickers in the United States and around the world. The findings in this report help inform policymakers, law enforcement, and civil society on gaps and areas of concern, as well as serve as a road map forward to end the scourge.

This year’s report focuses on effective ways local communities can address human trafficking proactively and on how national governments can support and empower them. Local communities are the most affected by this abhorrent crime and are also the first line of defense against human trafficking. By engaging and training law enforcement, religious leaders, teachers, tribal elders, business executives, and communities, we become more vigilant and learn to identify and address vulnerabilities swiftly. Proactive community-driven measures strengthen our ability to protect our most vulnerable and weaken a criminal’s ability to infiltrate, recruit, and exploit.

Religious Networks Against Human Trafficking

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word are proud to belong to national networks of religious life working to end human trafficking and support its survivors. In 2015 we took a Congregational Corporate Stance Against Human Trafficking and since then have joined with hundreds of other religious congregations and organizations to affirm the right and dignity of all people and denounce human trafficking and the social systems that promote it.

In the United States, we are members of US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. USCSAHT posts monthly reflections, prayer resources, and educational resources available for all in the work to end human trafficking. Learn more and check out their resources online.

In Mexico, we are members of Red Rahamim. Red Rahamim was formed in 2016 and continues to work to build up its structure and programming and fulfill its mission to witness the values of mercy, compassion and freedom; to prevent trafficking by deepening their understanding and further training; and to care for those most vulnerable to trafficking and to accompany the victims.

In Peru, we are members of Red Kawsay. Red Kawsay is active in educating others about human trafficking and prevention, and joining together in prayer and demonstration against trafficking. To read more about their work and access their resources visit their web page.

International - All of these Networks against trafficking are part of the international network of Consecrated Life against trafficking in persons called: Talitha Kum. Talitha Kum was formed in 2009 as a joint project of the International Union of Superiors General and the Union of Superiors General to coordinate and strengthen the work to end human trafficking by religious communities and consecrated persons. You can read more about their mission and work on their website.

Prayer – Litany

We call on the great cloud of witnesses, the communion of saints, who accompany us in the work to end human trafficking and provide loving support to survivors. We ask these holy women and men to intercede on our behalf, to convert the hearts and minds of those who perpetuate and profit from the slavery and exploitation of others, to protect those trapped in situations of trafficking from harm and lead them to safety and recovery.

Please respond after each invocation with the name of the saint and, ***“Pray for us.”***

St. Josephine Bakhita – Patron Saint of Victims of Trafficking... you who were kidnapped at a young age and sold into slavery know the suffering of those who are exploited and sold by traffickers throughout the world today. Be with them and with us as we work to end all forms of modern day slavery and care for those who have been impacted. *St. Josephine Bakhita, Pray For Us*

St. Joseph – Patron Saint of Workers... you who accompany laborers throughout the world know millions of workers around the world today are abused and exploited by human traffickers. Be with them in their suffering, and help us to realize a world economy that honors the dignity and rights of every human person and allows them the opportunity to do the work that God has called them to do. *St. Joseph the Worker, Pray for Us.*

St. Francis of Assisi – Patron Saint of Ecology... you who loved the whole of creation and saw how we are all connected, open our eyes to the ways that our destruction of God’s precious earth is causing many families to flee their homes in search of safety and health, putting them at risk for exploitation by traffickers.

Be with all climate refugees to keep them safe in their journeys. Inspire in us an ecological conversion to see how our work to end the exploitation and abuse of human persons is connected to ending the exploitation and abuse of our common home. *St. Francis of Assisi, Pray For Us.*

St. Rose of Lima – Patron Saint of Nurses... you who watch over and guide the hands of nurses, doctors, and medical professionals are also present for those they treat in their hospitals and clinics. Open the eyes, ears, and hearts of medical workers everywhere to recognize the victims of human trafficking they come into contact with and support them in their recovery and freedom. *St. Rose of Lima, Pray For Us.*

St. Nicholas – Patron Saint of Children ... you who love all God’s children and want to bring them joy, protect all children currently trapped in sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and exploited on the streets as beggars. Be with us as we work to ensure that every child is able to experience a safe and happy childhood, free from fear and exploitation. *St. Nicholas, Pray For Us.*

St. Zita – Patron Saint of Maids and Domestic Workers... you who worked as a domestic servant, open our eyes and hearts to all whose labor is exploited behind closed doors and who are trapped and abused by their employers in homes. With your help may we end the trafficking and exploitation of foreign and domestic workers in homes around the world. *St. Zita, Pray For Us.*

St. Alexius of Rome – Patron Saint of Beggars... you who hear the petitions of those trying to escape crippling poverty and desperation, be with the poor and vulnerable who fill our streets and cities just trying to survive. Protect them from traffickers and grow compassion in our hearts as we work together to eliminate the sources of poverty that lead to trafficking and exploitation. *St. Alexius Pray For Us.*

St. Peter – Patron Saint of Fisherman... you who were a great fisherman and followed Jesus’ call to become a fisher of men and women, protect all those whose labor and lives are exploited and abused by those in the fishing industry today. Help to raise our awareness of trafficking in the seafood industry and work to end this form of modern day slavery. *St. Peter, Pray For Us.*

St. Louise de Marillac – Patron Saint of Social Workers... you who dedicated your life to serving the poor and vulnerable, accompany all social workers today who seek to bring God’s healing love and compassion to those who have survived the horrors of human trafficking. Guide their hands and words as they work to offer safety and support through their many ministries to end human trafficking. *St. Louise de Marillac, Pray For Us.*

St. Peter Claver – Patron Saint of Slaves... you who worked to protect the human rights and human dignity of the most vulnerable members in society, continue to inspire in us this same spirit of care for our brothers and sisters. Help us to see the image of God in all whom we encounter as we work to end modern day slavery in the form of human trafficking. *St. Peter Claver, Pray For Us.*

St. Frances Cabrini – Patron Saint of Migrants... you who dedicated your life to helping thousands of people looking for food and work far from their homeland, risking their lives on long, dangerous journeys to foreign lands. Help us to advocate for just immigration law that respect the right of dignified human migration. *St. Frances Cabrini, Pray For Us.*

St. Damian and St. Cosmas – Patron Saints of Medicine and Transplants... you brothers who were skilled surgeons and sought to save lives, we appeal to you to convert the hearts and minds of those who use medical skills to steal and traffic in human organs. Protect and heal the bodies of all those who have been victims of organ trafficking and aid us in the fight to prevent this form of trafficking in the world. *Sts. Damian and Cosmas, Pray For Us.*

St. Teresa of Avila – Patron Saint of Lawyers ... you who courageously worked to satisfy the hunger for justice with strong and tender will, with sacrifice, in defense of the helpless, we ask you to be with those who defend victims of human trafficking, that they too may persevere until justice is achieved. *St. Teresa of Avila, Pray For Us.*

St. Christopher – Patron Saint of Travelers... you who watch over and keep safe all those in transit, we ask for your protection for all who travel seeking safety and shelter so they do not fall victim to deceit of human traffickers. We ask for your blessing on all those who work in transportation, especially truck drivers, who join our collective efforts to recognize and support those caught in human trafficking. *St. Christopher, Pray For Us.*

St. Agnes of Rome – Patron Saint of Adolescents... you who suffered confinement in a brothel, protect all children and adolescents who are exposed to sexual exploitation. Help us to protect them from false promises of love or work. *St. Agnes of Rome, Pray For Us.*

St. Martin de Porres – Patron Saint of Social Justice... you who inspire us and accompany us in our work for a more just and loving world, intercede on our behalf to realize justice and healing for all those who have been impacted by human trafficking. Together with you and all these holy men and women may our efforts for justice and freedom for all bear great fruit. *St. Martin de Porres, Pray For Us.*

Claudio Maria Dubuis – Founder of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word... you who saw the face of Christ, the Incarnate Word, crying out to you in the suffering of the multitudes, help us to see the presence of the Incarnate Word in all whom we meet in our work to end human trafficking. Guide us to be the hands and feet that offer relief, comfort, and love to those who are suffering, and give us courage in the work to end human trafficking in our communities and around the world. *Claudio Maria Dubuis, Pray For Us.*

Closing Prayer:

O Great Spirit of Life and Liberation,
flowing through these holy men and women and amongst us now,
hear these prayers and petitions that we offer up to you this day.

Bless us and guide us in the ongoing work
to end human trafficking and all forms of modern day slavery.

Inspired by your loving presence in our lives,
may we incarnate that presence for others
as we work to realize healing and freedom throughout creation.

Praised by the Incarnate Word – Forever Amen!

Take Action

15 Ways to Combat Human Trafficking

The U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons leads the United States' global engagement against human trafficking and supports the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts across the U.S. government. These efforts include forging partnerships with foreign governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to develop and implement effective strategies for confronting modern slavery.

While these efforts are critical to addressing this issue, you don't need to be affiliated with any government or organization to help make a difference. Anyone can join in the fight against human trafficking. Here are a few ideas to consider.

Learn the indicators of human trafficking so you can help identify a potential trafficking victim. Human trafficking awareness training is available for individuals, businesses, first responders, law enforcement, educators, and federal employees, among others.

If you are in the United States and believe someone may be a victim of human trafficking, report your suspicions to law enforcement by calling 911 or the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Resource Center line at 1-888-373-7888. Trafficking victims, including undocumented individuals, are eligible for services and immigration assistance.

Be a conscientious and informed consumer. Discover your slavery footprint, ask who picked your tomatoes or made your clothes, or check out the Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor. Encourage companies to take steps to investigate and prevent human trafficking in their supply chains and publish the information for consumer awareness.

Volunteer and support anti-trafficking efforts in your community.

Meet with and/or write to your local, state, and federal government representatives to let them know you care about combating human trafficking, and ask what they are doing to address it.

Host an awareness event to watch and discuss films about human trafficking. For example, learn how modern slavery exists today; watch an investigative documentary about sex trafficking; or discover how human trafficking can affect global food supply chains. Also, check out CNN's Freedom Project for more stories on the different forms of human trafficking around the world.

Organize a fundraiser and donate the proceeds to an anti-trafficking organization.

Encourage your local schools to partner with students and include modern slavery in their curricula. As a parent, educator, or school administrator, be aware of how traffickers target school-aged children.

Be well-informed. Set up a web alert to receive current human trafficking news. Become familiar with public awareness materials available from the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Homeland Security.

Work with a local religious community or congregation to help stop trafficking by supporting a victim service provider or spreading awareness of human trafficking.

Businesses: Provide jobs, internships, skills training, and other opportunities to trafficking survivors.

Students: Take action on your campus. Join or establish a university club to raise awareness about human trafficking and initiate action throughout your local community. Consider doing one of your research papers on a topic concerning human trafficking. Request that human trafficking be included in university curricula.

Health Care Providers: Learn how to identify the indicators of human trafficking and assist victims. With assistance from anti-trafficking organizations, extend low-cost or free services to human trafficking victims.

Journalists: The media plays an enormous role in shaping perceptions and guiding the public conversation about human trafficking. Here are some media best practices on how to effectively and responsibly report stories on human trafficking.

Attorneys: Offer human trafficking victims legal services, including support for those seeking benefits or special visas. Resources are available for attorneys representing victims of human trafficking.

WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER?

Theological Reflection on Human Trafficking

When we think about the situation of human rights around the world, one of the most egregious abuses of human rights that comes to mind is modern day slavery in the form of human trafficking. That is because the traffickers abuse women, men, and children from all corners of the planet and subject them daily to various situations of exploitation. Human trafficking is a crime that can lead victims to: sexual exploitation, forced labor, domestic servitude, forced child begging, or extraction of organs.

‘The LORD said: Where is your brother?’ (Gen 4:9)

According to the International Labor Organization, it is estimated that every year between 600,000 and 800,000 men, women, and children throughout the world are victims of Human Trafficking within and outside their countries of origin. These people are forced to generate wealth for others through forced labor in different areas like prostitution, mining, agriculture, industry, or forced military recruitment.

In Peru there are between 3,000-4,000 victims of human trafficking each year. All are led by necessity, tricked by false promises of legitimate work and instead converted into sexual objects. And in Mexico, they have the largest number of trafficked persons in all the Americas. 70% are victims of the cartels, or organized crime groups, which operate throughout the country. They kidnap people of all ages and force them to work as prostitutes or other forced labor, and in many cases the local, state, and federal authorities are complicit as well.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen 4:9)

As Pope Francis reminds us in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelium Gaudium*, about the joy of the Gospel in the world today, we cannot be indifferent to the cry of God when we are asked, ‘Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labor? Let us not look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think. The issue involves everyone!’ It truly does involve everyone when we think of all the ways we are complicit. Human trafficking does not happen in a vacuum. There are many factors that contribute to its proliferation and promulgation.

One invisible but powerful factor is the objectification of people, which prioritizes money and profits over people. We stop seeing the other as a human being, and rather we see them as a profitable resource to exploit. Are we aware of the labor practices of the large companies from whom we buy their products or use their services? Are we aware of the labor practices for the food, coffee, and tea we purchase? If not, we could be supporting human trafficking. For example in Zambia, the largest percent of forced child labor is in agriculture (including coffee and tea) and mining (metals used in products/technology sold in other countries.)

Added to this objectification is the widespread violence against women, their oversexualization, the social phenomenon of the 'patriarchal-macho' that contributes to raising men and women within structures of domination based on gender; social myths regarding male sexuality and their demands; and the 'normalization' or tolerance of crime which demonstrates the lack of moral consistency of society. Are we not outraged that more than 80% of trafficking victims are women and girls? And don't forget that if there were no clients, trafficking wouldn't exist.

Another factor is unfettered global capitalism which has created drastic disparities in wealth, leaving many families struggling to survive in extreme poverty. In the search for income and opportunity, many of the poor and vulnerable become victims of human traffickers who trick them by promising a better life. It is estimated that around 15,000 people are trafficked across the border into the U.S. each year. There is no person in this world who knowing the daily conditions experienced by people in a situation of trafficking, would willingly choose it. It is precisely that the victims were looking for something different for them and their families, and were tricked instead.

Trafficking also continues because it is not well understood, and not just by average citizens walking down the street, but also by authorities that fail to execute the laws and declarations that exist so that "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." However as we stated earlier human trafficking is the third largest organized crime in the world and generates between 32 and 36 billion dollars a year. So there is still a lot of work to do.

'The LORD said: What have you done?' (Gen 4:10)

Scripture reminds us of God's call that we have special concern for those who suffer and are the most vulnerable such as widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. "Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other." Even if we don't know their names or faces, these are our brothers and sisters; they are the suffering body of Christ in the world today. We are called to strengthen our solidarity and affirm the dignity and rights of all people, and to denounce human trafficking and the economic and social systems that support it.

Part of our work to combat human trafficking, is to bring the reality of this modern day slave trade out of the shadows and into the light, so we can recognize our own complicity. Because in the words of a survivor of human trafficking the oldest profession in the book isn't prostitution, it's turning a blind eye.

We must continue to educate ourselves, to reflect on the current reality in light of our faith teachings, and take action. As Jesus, the Incarnate Word, reminds us in Matthew "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it to me." We are our brother and sister's keeper. We know where they are. We know what they are suffering. What will we do?

Reflection Questions:

- 1) In what ways might I be complicit in creating a world where human trafficking exists?
- 2) What more do I want/need to learn about human trafficking in my own city/country?
- 3) Where do I feel called to get involved in the work to end human trafficking and promote human dignity?

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