



Prayer Vigil

"Together against Human Trafficking!"

February 8, 2019

Prayer (Pope Francis, 12 February 2018)

St. 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.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; wounded or maligned by human trafficking. Intercede on their behalf, with our God of mercy, so that they will be released from their chains of captivity.

May the example of Jesus give them hope so that they may find healing from their wounds. Amen.

Reader 1:

Today, let us together celebrate the fifth World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking.

"Certainly there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience; because it is thorny; because it is shameful." (Pope Francis, 12 February 2018)

Faced with this odious crime which is so widespread and organized, we can't act alone! We feel like we can go faster when we act alone, but in fact we get lost in the selfishness, discouragement, isolation that destroys our lives. This renders us powerless in the face of the fact that tens of millions of people are exploited and enslaved.

Only **together** can we walk the long road to freedom and promote the dignity of every person; only **together** can we fulfil our potential as persons, as sisters and brothers, daughters and sons of the same Father. Yes, "Together, against trafficking"!

Reader 2:

Let us listen to several facts about human trafficking:

- *There have never been as many slaves in history as there are today.*
- *72% of those trafficked are women.*
- *30% of trafficked persons are children, both girls and boys.*
- *Human trafficking happens in every country in the world.*
- *Illegal profits from sexual exploitation equal two-thirds of the profit from all forms of human trafficking.*
- *Karim is 8 years old and is one of the many children trafficked and exploited in the textile industry.*
- *Iara, 13, was trafficked into a forced marriage.*
- *Jamil got into debt trying to feed his family. Threatened, he gave a kidney to pay the debt.*

Let us join our voices to the cries of anguish of so many of our sisters and brothers, let us reach out to them, breaking down the barriers that we have built and that divide us. **Together**, let us find the courage to move beyond ourselves and undertake the concrete path of solidarity. **Together**, let us act as members of the one human family to which we belong.

We pray with our brothers and sisters who suffer the violence of trafficking and together we proclaim (*Psalm 13*):

How long, Lord, will you continue to forget about us?

How long will you forget our pain, our chains, our dream of living and working with dignity, our desire to study and to be respected?

How long will you hide your face from us, with the arrogance of those who exploit us and the indifference of those who refuse to see?

How long, Lord, will you continue to forget about us?

How long will thoughts and worries sadden our days, weighing down our souls?

How long will those who treat us badly keep us in subjugation?

How long, Lord, will you continue to forget about us?

How long, Lord, will we continue to forget about you, about your love?

Reader 3:

We will now listen to several texts that help us understand the importance of joining forces and acting together against human trafficking. At the end of each statement, we will respond:

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

In 2004, CATHII, the Action Committee against Internal and International Human Trafficking was set up.

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

In 2009, Talitha Kum, a worldwide network of consecrated life against human trafficking, was established.

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

In 2013, the Quebec Coalition against Human Trafficking was founded.

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

Teach us to look at our world with eyes full of compassion and mercy. Give us the courage not to surrender to those whose words are full of hatred, violence and death.

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

We trust in your faithfulness, God; your Word gives us the courage to be bold. Our hearts rejoice with joy in your saving power, O God.

O Lord, we sing to you, who have shown us the path to freedom and goodness.

Together we can oppose human trafficking.

Together, we can combat human trafficking. That is why we are called to build communities, spaces of encounter among ourselves, both with our neighbours and with those who are distant. The Word of God calls us together, unites us and enlightens us.

A Biblical Reading can be chosen from the following:

- Exodus 3:1-12 (Moses' vocation)
- Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)
- Luke 4:14-21 (The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...)

Silent Meditation

Reader 4:

Prayer unites us, brings us closer together, makes us sisters and brothers, helps us to overcome divisions and fears, and frees us from evil. Let us pray, together, with the words that Jesus taught us, which enable us to discover that we are sisters and brothers, children of one God.

Our Father . . .

Deliver us from all forms of exploitation. ***Deliver us from evil.***

Deliver us from racial discrimination. ***Deliver us from evil.***

Deliver us from our greed for possessions. ***Deliver us from evil.***

Deliver us from the sense of superiority and the desire to dominate.

Deliver us from evil.

You can continue with spontaneous invocations, using a litany form of prayer.

We have prayed together for an end to human trafficking. Let us continue, together, to commit ourselves and to collaborate so that every woman, man, and child may be recognized and respected in their dignity. May each of us here present find the courage to feel responsible for one another.

Let us recite together the **concluding prayer** inspired by Etty Hillesum:

Dear God, these are anxious times.

I promise you one thing, my God:
I will help you, my God,
to not extinguish
your presence in me. . .

That is all we can manage these days
and all that really matters:
that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves,
And perhaps in others as well. . .

It seems more and more clear to me. . .
that we must help You
and defend Your dwelling place inside us
to the end.