

JANUARY

is

National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

The month ensures visibility on the issue of trafficking but January 31st cannot be the end of reminding the public that the slavery of people is intolerable in any society that calls itself human. In some parts of the world, January is a month that is dark and cold, an apt parallel to the millions whose lives have been relegated to commodity status, to slavery, and live in a world darkened by the selfishness and greed of those whose own lives are without light.

May we recall God's goodness as we reflect and pray for an end to Human Trafficking.



Reading 1. Who are these slaves who live in the shadow of death, whose dignity is abused and ignored and whose lives are given in obedience to money makers and evil doers? They are children who will never see the inside of a classroom because they work like "little adults" day in and day out, harvesting the cocoa for chocolate they will never taste. They are young men who cannot dream of a better life because every moment is governed by the number of fish they catch in waters far away from their homelands. These slaves are women who will never stand in their own kitchens and prepare meals for their children because they are in servitude in other kitchens to masters or mistresses whose consciences do not allow an opening for the light of human respect.

Pause

Sing: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

Reading 2. A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. . . . It is no coincidence that, in the canticle in which Saint Francis praises God for his creatures, he goes on to say: "Praised be you my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love". Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society. Laudato Si' 91

Pause

Sing: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

Reading 3. The Atlantic Mid-West Province is committed to raise awareness about the reality of human trafficking in Canada and in the United States. The term "trafficking in persons" can be

misleading: the crime of human trafficking is more accurately described as modern day slavery. It is estimated that there are between 20 and 40 million people trapped in various forms of slavery in the world today. A disproportionate number of women and girls are victims of human sex trafficking.

Through annual forums and in other ways, our sisters, associates and partners in Canada collaborate to educate and galvanize the community to end sexual exploitation slavery in Canada. Labor trafficking brings human Slavery into our daily lives. Labor trafficking is as close to us as the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the appliances we use. In our work to extend human rights into the areas of trafficking in the United States, Sisters and Associates are working to end slavery in our food and other supply chains as we continue to support legislation to achieve the goal of slave free products.

St. Francis of Assisi says that “all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a small candle.” It may not be a candle, but each of us has the power to illuminate the paths of those whose lives we touch or even never will touch. Each of us is called to be a bearer of light. The prayers we offer can be that light. Prayer is without boundaries. It can reach across genders, cultures, countries and even into the lives of the most desperate. Prayer offers life-support and the difference we make through prayer can make all the difference.



Pause

**Sing: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly,
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**

Together Let us Pray

A Prayer for the End of Human Trafficking

Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J.

God of freedom, beauty and truth
we believe that your deepest desire,
your most powerful energy,
is that all creation might know abundant life.
We raise our voices in anguished prayer
for our sisters and brothers,
women and girls, men and boys,
who are modern day slaves;
They are your beloved daughters and sons,
exploited sexually or forced to work
because of human violence and greed.

Fill us with your holy anger and your sacred passion
that those who are trafficked might know healing and justice;
that traffickers will come to repentance and conversion;
that all of us might live in such a way
that others are not made to pay the price
for our comfort and convenience.
Hasten the coming of the day when all people
and our precious Earth itself
will be treated, not as a commodity,
but as radiant images of your freedom, beauty and truth.
Amen. May it be so.

**Sing: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly,
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**