Trafficking

Human trafficking is the act of transporting a human being by force or coercion for work or sexual exploitation.

Nearly a hundred years ago, my husband's great grandfather Jose Molina, newly arrived from Mexico, was trafficked from Texas to Pennsylvania. He was promised work in another part of Texas, but when he arrived, he was essentially indentured, left without enough resources to even contact his wife and children. He didn't see them for nearly two decades.

I've talked about this before. When I worked in the Street Ministry in San Francisco, I regularly encountered folks who were picked up by police in cites all over the country and put onto buses or trains with one-way tickets and a few dollars for food along the way. They were almost always told there would be services, housing or even jobs waiting for them on their arrival. Instead, they slept on the streets and begged for their needs. Nothing changed for them except the locale and the weather.

Today, the US president is talking about sweeping the streets of Washington DC, equating homelessness to with violent criminality. Meanwhile, the Israeli president is talking about sweeping people out of Gaza, "for their own safety." Safety from his own troops.

Let's call this what it is. It's human trafficking, perpetuated by strong man autocrats.

There's no doubt that the Republican President will do what his party has done in the recent past: they will ship unhoused people off to big cities in Blue States, under physical threat. But what will come of the civilians in Gaza once they are forced out of their homes? And who will benefit from trafficking them?

This is no time to be silent. My question for us is this: what can we do to stay with the people most at-risk? And how can we stop this from happening?

In Peace,
Rev Denis