

The Church's Position on Human Trafficking:

The elimination of human trafficking and serving and empowering trafficking survivors is a priority issue for the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis stated “Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.”

As Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, former Chairman of the Committee on Migration, has stated: “ . . . , we will lift our voices loudly in prayer, hope, and love for trafficking victims and survivors. If just one person realizes from this day that they or someone they know is being trafficked, we will have made a difference.”

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

As Pope Francis has stated: “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”

There are an estimated 21 million victims of human trafficking worldwide. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, including the United States and Canada.

Migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. An estimated 17,500 individuals are trafficked across U.S. borders and forced into slavery each year.

In Fiscal Year 2016, the Federal Bureau of Investigations opened 1,894 domestic and international trafficking cases and the Department of Homeland Security initiated 1,025 cases.

Although sex trafficking remains a serious problem, foreign victims are more often found in situations of labor trafficking. In fact, the two largest trafficking cases in the United States involved labor trafficking in Guam and New York.

In addition to working to eradicate human trafficking, our nations should ensure that victims have the services and support they need to heal, find affordable housing, earn a living wage, and obtain self-sufficiency.

