



International Day of Prayer and Awareness against human trafficking 8 February 2020

PRAYER VIGIL - TOGETHER AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Extract from the text proposed by Talitha Kum

Complete version: <https://preghieracontrotratta.org/?lang=en>

Introduction :

Today, we celebrate together the sixth World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking. In many parts of the world, trafficking is a scourge that strikes everyone without distinction, but it strikes above all the poorest and those who in various ways can be defined as “the least”, the “discarded” of our society. Those who live on the margins and the weakest, such as women and children, are the targeted victims of injustice and abuse. May Saint Bakhita intercede for us and for the many Josephine Bakhitas of our time.

Entrance hymn of your choice

Leader: We present some stories of engagement against trafficking [other stories may be chosen].
Stories of desperation, poverty, courage.

1 A Story from Uganda:

“I was working in a chemical industry in Uganda. After I got sick because of an allergy to the materials we used, I had to leave work. I bought a small kiosk to sell food to passers-by. Everything was fine, until I was cheated by an agency that offered me work in the Middle East. I thought I had a great opportunity but found myself in domestic slavery. I worked tirelessly and received no food or compensation...”

Silence

2 A story from Italy:

“I had decided to leave my country, Nigeria, after the death of my father. I wanted to help my mother and my brothers. When I arrived in Italy with the promise of a job, I found myself on the road, under the direction of a Madame who subjected me to physical and psychological violence. I thought that once the debt was paid I would be free from this nightmare. But they kept demanding more and more money. Alone and without papers I ended up in prison, even though I was the victim...”

Silence

Leader: “If there are so many young women victims of trafficking who end up on the streets of our cities, it is because many men here — young, middle-aged, elderly — demand these services and are willing to pay for their pleasure. I wonder then, is the principal cause of trafficking really the traffickers?”

I believe the principal cause is the unscrupulous selfishness of the many hypocrites in our world. Of course, arresting traffickers is an obligation of justice. But the true solution is the conversion of hearts, cutting off demand in order to dry out the market.” (Pope Francis, Address to the participants in the World Day of Prayer against Human Trafficking, 12 February 2018).

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel (36: 26-27):

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your body, and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and I will see to it that you walk according to my laws, and you will observe and put into practice my prescriptions.”

Reader: When our hearts are indifferent to the pain of our sisters and brothers,

All: Lord, free our hearts

R: When our minds refuse to want to know if what we use and consume has been produced by slave workers

All: Lord, free our minds

R: When our eyes can't see our sister, our brother, in the other:

All: Lord, free our eyes

R: When our ears close to the cry of freedom

All: Lord, clear our ears

R: When our hands and feet become instruments of violence against others

All: Lord free our hands and feet.

Leader: Each face can be met, caressed, listened to. Together it is possible to break the chains of slavery. In this way, life stories can become stories of rebirth, hope, dignity. (Two readers bring each one a candle, place it on the altar and read the following texts!)

Reading, conclusion to the Story from Uganda: “...Desperation led Jessie to flee and luckily she managed to get to the embassy. For her, it was the beginning of a new life: they took her to our community, which took care of her, giving her back food, clothes and dignity. One day she asked us if we could go home: she often thought of the happiness that that small kiosk she owned only a few years earlier gave her. So we helped Jessie to obtain the documents and make contact with her country of origin. Today she lives in Uganda and we continue to support her on her journey of reintegration into work and society.”

Refrain of a song of life

Reading, conclusion to the Story from Italy: “...When I met Maryam in prison she told me her story and I decided to help her. So I convinced my community in Sicily to welcome her into our home to obtain house arrest. In these years Maryam has managed to transform her life and help many young people, who had fallen like her into the hands of the traffickers. Today she is happy: she is a mother and her family is beautiful, as is our community which welcomed her as a daughter and where she still works as an educator.”

Refrain of a song of life

Leader: Prayer unites us, makes us sisters and brothers, helps us to overcome divisions, fears and frees us from evil. Let us pray, together, Psalm 34:17-22)

The righteous cry and the Lord hears them;

frees them from all their misfortunes.

The Lord is close to those who have a troubled heart,

Save the humble in spirit.

There are many afflictions of the righteous;

But the Lord frees him from all.
He preserves all his bones;
not a single one breaks
Wickedness will make the wicked perish,
those who hate the right will be found guilty.
The Lord redeems the lives of his servants,
none of those who trust in him will be found guilty

Leader: Our first call is Love, and responding to this Love is necessary and urgent because it is the only thing that can give meaning and peace to our existence. We are called to bear fruit with respect to this: there are gestures, words, feelings and behaviors which manifest to those around us the deep affection of a God who loved us so much that he put himself in our shoes; embodying himself in our world; an event that has transformed the lives of each of us. These knots link our lives with the stories we hear and with the people around us, as we commit ourselves not to remain indifferent but to transform the world around us.

OUR FATHER

Prayer of Sainte Bakhita



Saint Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured unspeakable hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church. O Saint Josephine Bakhita, assist all those who are entrapped in slavery; Intercede on their behalf with the God of Mercy so that the chains of their captivity will be broken. May God himself free all those who have been threatened, wounded or mistreated by the trade and trafficking of human beings. Bring comfort to survivors of this slavery and teach them to look to Jesus as an example of hope and faith so that they may find healing from their wounds. We ask you to pray for us and to intercede on behalf of us all: that we may not fall into indifference, that we may open our eyes and be able to see the misery and wounds of our many brothers and sisters deprived of their dignity and their freedom, and may we hear their cry for help.