



PRAYER VIGIL 8 FEBRUARY 2020 - TOGETHER AGAINST TRAFFICKING

[As they enter, each participant is given a thread, each of different colors (about 50 cm), and an image with the prayer of St. Bakhita.]

Leader: 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.

[Symbol: Place in front of the altar a globe, a painting of St. Josephine Bakhita, and large iron chains. As you go from the entrance to the altar you hear the sound of the chains.]

Entrance hymn of your choice

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

[Readers each bring a piece of the puzzle; after reading, each piece is placed at the foot of the altar and joined together. In total there are 6 pieces. The image of the puzzle is a photo of collective commitment against trafficking - [download](#)].

Reader 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...”

[One minute’s silence as you hear the sound of the chains]

Reader 2. A story from Thailand: “I am 40 years old, many of which were lived with my family in a shantytown in Thailand. I couldn’t study because my parents were poor, I had no papers and I was and I still suffer from schizophrenia. I earned my living by selling waste. When I had the opportunity to board a fishing boat I accepted the offer, I was so tired of such poverty. I dreamt of travelling around the world. Unfortunately, I found myself in a worse situation than before: I ate very little and never rested. Even the promised payment never arrived. After a few months I was abandoned on an island in Indonesia. I didn’t understand their language, I suffered a lot...”

[One minute’s silence as you hear the sound of the chains]

Reader 3. 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...”



[One minute's silence as you hear the sound of the chains]

[Symbol I: 10 boys enter to the rhythm of a drum; 8 have their hands on their faces, the last two wear a mask. They are the anonymous faces of the trafficked people. Other people carry posters, or hang the posters around their necks, with one of the following inscriptions: indifference, pain, silence, loneliness, violence, shame, omission, fear. They are spaced around the sides of the church. The last two with masks enter together with the signs “customer” and “goods” and stand in the center. The “customer” chains the “goods”, using a chain or paper tape.]

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).

Reader: A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel: “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.” (Ezekiel 36: 26-27)

Responses

A different reader from the assembly may be chosen for each line

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

All: Lord, free our hearts

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

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

All: Lord, free our eyes

When our ears close to the cry of freedom

All: Lord, clear our ears

When our hands and feet become instruments of violence against others

All: Lord free our hands and feet.

[Symbol II: Some people engaged in the fight against trafficking, from different realities (clergy and lay ministers, professionals, volunteers, religious) enter in procession, each one carrying a lighted candle. They approach the people who cover their faces with their hands and help them to uncover their face, then they turn the poster and read the word found there aloud, inviting the assembly to repeat the word aloud. On the backs of the posters there are words such as: rebirth, hope, dignity, love, dialogue,

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brotherhood, respect, future. For the last two, who have the 'customer' and 'merchandise' signs, turning these signs forms a single inscription: "Together, against trafficking".]

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.

[Three readers chosen from among the ten people involved in anti-trafficking efforts tell the end of the stories and eventually complete the puzzle.]

Reader 4. 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

Reader 5. Conclusion to the Story from Thailand: "...Somchai tried to escape and, with the help of two church organizations, managed to regain his freedom and return to Thailand. We helped him obtain the documents he had never had and we followed his case, allowing him to obtain compensation for damages and to build a new house, where he still lives with his parents. He resumed his old job and now manages to live with dignity, despite his illness."

Refrain of a song of life

Reader 6. 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 (vv. 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.

[A second reading from scripture can be inserted here. We recommend the following. You can add a short meditation and a dance and a song of your choice:

- *John 15:1-8*
- *John 15:13-17*
- *Matthew 7:15-20*
- *2 Timothy 2:8-13*

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.

[Symbol: each joins the thread they received on entering with that of their neighbour. Then they raise the united threads with their hands and so that everyone repeats twice: “Together against trafficking!”]

Leader: To listen to the Word of God one must have an open heart, be ready and willing to receive the words in one’s heart. And we would like you to be able to have this word in your heart when you return to your homes, allowing it to bear fruit.

*[Symbol: Each person is invited to write (on the **Mentimeter** platform) a keyword that expresses what he/she experiences at that particular time. The words will be projected on the screen to create a word cloud. For those who do not have the possibility to do it by phone, you can use posters or pass around post-its, which are then attached to the globe that was placed in front of the altar, so as not to exclude anyone and so that everyone feels part of this final symbol.]*

Closing hymn of your choice

** Text edited by Giovani Impegno Missionario (GIM) and the youth of the Community of Pope John XXIII.*

Visit [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com), click on the ‘Sign up’ button at the top right and fill in your details. Then click on “events” and “get started”. Click on the button “New Presentation” and choose “Word Cloud” from the question types. In “Entries per voter” insert 1 (number 1). Click present and then use the code provided on your mobile phone at [menti.com](https://www.menti.com). That allows you to submit a word to the word cloud.