



Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita

February 8, 2025

**Presented by the Dismantling Racism
& Ending Human Trafficking Committees**

Hymn: [Shelter Me, O God – Bob Hurd](#)

Introduction

Bakhita was born in Sudan's embattled Darfur region in 1869. Kidnapped at the age of 7, she became a slave and was sold and re-sold multiple times. She experienced the humiliations and sufferings of slavery, both physical and moral. Eventually, the family who owned her arrived in Italy. There Bakhita met the Canossian Sisters who facilitated her baptism as "Josephine", and escape captivity. In 1893, Josephine entered the novitiate of the Canossian Sisters and ministered until her death on February 8, 1947. She was canonized on October 1, 2000, and named Patron Saint of Trafficking Victims.

Pause for Reflection

"The inequities created by systemic racism have survived in part because of the intentional destruction of certain racial groups' social support networks. Traffickers often seek out individuals with weaker community or family connections, knowing they have fewer safeguards. The chattel slavery system relied on the separation of family units during auctions and trading of enslaved people. It restricted where and how enslaved people could gather or socialize to weaken communal bonds to avoid a unified rebellion for freedom.

This pattern of fracturing families and communities has led to an unjust overrepresentation of Black individuals in other systems, like prisons, runaway and homeless youth services, and foster or institutional care, that exacerbate the social isolation and vulnerability on which traffickers prey. Similar family separation policies were used to weaken or destroy indigenous families and communities, including forcibly removing Native children from their families and tribes to send them to "boarding schools" with the intention of forcing them to assimilate and no longer identify with their culture. Such policies have resulted in an ongoing disproportionate number of Native children in the child welfare system, increasing their vulnerability to human trafficking."

Source: [US Dept. of State \(2025, Jan. 20\). Acknowledging Historical and Ongoing Harm...](#)

Reflection Questions

What moves you?

Surprises you?

Challenges you?

Magnificat

(From John Shelby Spong's website "A New Christianity for A New World" 19 Dec 2007)

- 1) My soul sings in gratitude.
I'm dancing in the mystery of God.
The light of the Holy One is within me
and I am blessed, so truly blessed.
- 2) This goes deeper than human thinking.
I am filled with awe
at Love whose only condition
is to be received.
- 3) The gift is not for the proud,
for they have no room for it.
The strong and self-sufficient ones
don't have this awareness.
- 4) But those who know their emptiness
can rejoice in Love's fullness.
It's the Love that we are made for,
the reason for our being.
It fills our inmost heart space
and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.

Intersessions

All Response: St. Josephine Bakhita, pray for them.

Leader: St. Josephine Bakhita, intercede for us as we lift up these prayers.

1. For the victims of racism and human trafficking, that they may find freedom, healing, and restoration. **R/**
2. For the perpetrators of human trafficking, that their hearts may be converted and their actions transformed by justice and love. **R/**
3. For the police and law enforcement officers working to arrest traffickers and protect the vulnerable, that they may act with integrity and courage. **R/**
4. For the agencies and organizations supporting survivors of trafficking, that they may be strengthened in their mission to provide safety, hope, and renewal. **R/**
5. For all of us affected by the far-reaching effects of racism and human trafficking, that communities may come together to foster justice, reconciliation, and peace. **R/**

Leader: Let us take a moment of silence to hold these intentions in our hearts and to listen for God's call to act in love and justice.

Silent Reflection

Closing Prayer

Loving God, awaken our hearts and deepen our commitment to work for a world where every person is free and able to live with dignity and freedom. We ask for conversion of heart for us, for traffickers, and we pray for strong laws that protect victims. Give us wisdom and courage so that together we find ways to freedom that is your gift to all people. Amen

Hymn: [In the Arms of God - Tony Alonso](#)

