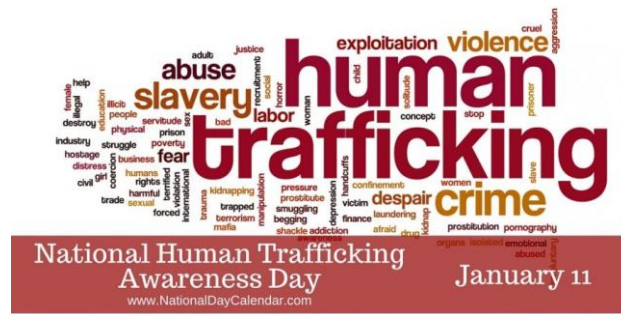


Prayer Service for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day January 11, 2019



Leader:

The 13th amendment abolished slavery in the United States over 150 years ago. However, the U.S. continues to be both a source and a destination country for human trafficking. We take this time to reflect on the victims of this modern day slavery and pray for the survivors.

Song Suggestions: We Are Called; Goodness is Stronger than Evil; Who will Speak?
Psalm 10: 1-2, 12-13, 14, 17, 18 NRSVCE

***Ant: Where there is no human help, God's help is still possible.
(Mother Theresa Gerhardinger)***

Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
In arrogance, the wicked persecute the poor-
let them be caught in the schemes they have devised!

Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand;
do not forget the oppressed.
Why do the wicked renounce God,
and say in their hearts, "You will not call us to account"?

But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief,
that you may take into your hands;
the helpless commit themselves to you;
you have been the helper of the orphan.

O Lord, you will hear the desire of the meek;
you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear
to do justice for the orphan and the oppressed,
so that those from earth may strike terror no more.

Ant: Where there is no human help, God's help is still possible.

Suggested Readings: Isaiah 40: 1-5; 27-31
Matthew 5: 1-11
Laudato Si Ch 2: 65, 81, or 89-90

Article below: Faith-based Organization Helps Trafficking Survivor Build a New Life

Intercessions:

Response: Compassionate God, hear our prayer.

Through the intercession of Mother Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, we pray:

For those exploited and objectified by the commercial sex trade...

For those forced to labor out of sight in factories, shops, farm fields and private homes ...

For those most vulnerable due to poverty, language and migration issues, and violence...

For the traffickers, pimps, and slaveholders who perpetuate the system of indignity...

For governments, corporations, and consumers that turn a blind eye to human trafficking ...

For all of us that we may examine how we perpetuate human slavery and how we can work to end it...



Closing:

Prayer for an End to Human Trafficking (Gen Cassani, SSND)

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of children and adults deceived and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor because of human greed.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being transgressed through threats, deception, and force.

We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.

Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted.

Make real your promises to fill these our sisters and brothers with a love that is tender and good, and send the exploiters away empty handed.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with them, that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

Amen.

(Elements of the prayer service adapted from Catholic Health Association, Human Rights First, and Office of Trafficking in Persons.)

Faith-based Organization Helps Trafficking Survivor Build a New Life

[Success Story](#)

Scared, with no one to turn to, Carla (name has been changed to protect the privacy of the people we serve) was in a country where she didn't speak the language. She had endured serious abuse as a victim of sex trafficking. She had already been trafficked across several states.

When the trafficking ring was raided by police, Carla was immediately placed in a detention center due to her immigration status. The law firm assisting her knew that Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington operated with support from the OTIP-funded Trafficking Victim Assistance Program and reached out to refer Carla for services. While waiting for Carla's release, the team at Catholic Charities went straight to work finding immediate shelter. When notice came that Carla would be arriving in the DC area within four hours with nothing but the clothing on her back, Catholic Charities was ready.

Before she could access housing, Carla needed a health screening and tested positive for tuberculosis. The local health clinics had a wait-time of two weeks so Catholic Charities reached out to their partner, a local Catholic hospital. The hospital immediately scheduled the X-ray and waived all the medical fees. With her health screen successfully completed, and identification ready, Carla could finally begin to enroll in a housing facility.

Working with her closely for the first week, Catholic Charities helped with medical and dental care, new clothes, food, a phone, and personal hygiene items. Staff made sure she had the tools to become familiar with her new city, knew what transportation options were available, and most importantly connected her with *pro bono* immigration legal services to begin the process for her T-Visa.

After spending a brief time in transitional housing, Carla was soon moved into permanent housing. She never thought this day would come. She was safe, and for the first time in a long time she was able to communicate with her family.

In just a few months in the DC area, Carla is making the most of her new life. Through the Employment Program at the Catholic Charities, Carla has found work in the evenings, so she can continue her intensive language classes during the day. Her English teacher says that Carla is the best student he has ever had. Carla navigates the DC area like a native, has begun making friends, and sees a therapist to help work through her years of abuse. While her journey to healing is a long road, Carla is looking forward to what is ahead and she continues to inspire everyone around her.



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province