

FEBRUARY 8, 2021

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

An Economy without Human Trafficking



1. OPENING PRAYER

God our Father. You have created us all as your children. We have made us members of the body of your son Jesus. Today we painfully remember St. Josephine Bakhita and all other sisters and brothers who are sold in the markets as commodities. We plea to you to enable your enslaved children to become free. Give to us passion and wisdom to create an economy without human slavery.

2. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS:

On December 2, 2014 the leading religious leaders signed a pledge in Vatican to end human slavery by 2020. Pope Francis requested the Unions of Major Superiors (USIG/USG) to work towards this. As a result, this day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking is on February 8 since 2015. For 2021 the theme is *An Economy without Human Trafficking*.

February 08th is the feast day of *St. Josephine Bakhita of Sudan (1869-1947)*. She was trafficked as a child and sold into slavery. At last, an Italian family that bought her in 1882, freed her. Then she became a nun in the congregation of Canossian Sisters in Venice, Italy. There were 144 physical scars on her body due to the suffering she faced as a slave. Due to trauma, she forgot her birth name and the kidnappers nicknamed her *Bakhita* meaning 'fortunate'. Josephine was her baptismal name.

3. PRAYING THE BIBLE:

Amos 2:6-7:

This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed".

Reflection:

During the time of Amos, the poor were treated as commodity. God refused to accept the ill treatment meted to the persons. Selling the innocent to make profit continues to this day. In the neo liberal economy, the people are kidnapped, sold and exploited. Hence the present-day economic model is one of the main causes of trafficking. The entrepreneurs aim for maximum profit. On the other hand, consumers bargain to purchase goods at the cheapest cost. To meet these two ends, the people are enslaved, and their labour is exploited. According to [Trafficking and Slavery Fact Sheet](#), 40 million people are enslaved worldwide. 50% of the victims are in slave labour, 37.5% in forced marriage and 12.5% are in sex slavery. Slavery generates \$ 150 billion each year. Today a slave costs about \$90 on average worldwide. As they are low cost, they are disposed when they are sick or old.

Only a market with values can be at the service of human and the environment. "The economy of Francesco" promoted by Pope Francis aims towards the sustainable human and environment development.

Father Claret's encounter with Slavery:

The autobiography of Claret says that slavery and slave trade were means of wealth in Cuba. The Cuban population was more than one million at his time and 43.5% of them were slaves from Africa. In the letter addressed to Fr. Stephen Sala, after 2 years of his arrival

at Cuba, he wrote that those who owned the slaves were baptized, but were brutal in treating the slaves. The slaves were made to copulate in public and the public delighted on it. They were treated like horses or mules.

Slavery was already abolished in Spain in 1820 but it was not implemented in colonies like Cuba, in view of making the slave labour available. The law of the time forbade the Church to make any public criticism of the State otherwise they would face exile. Therefore, Claret had to be apolitical in dealing with the evil of slavery. He did not openly fight for the abolition, neither he accepted the slavery. In all ways possible he fought for the dignity of the slaves. Like St. Paul he appealed to the slave owners to be humane towards the slaves. In his Pastoral Letter he wrote that, "the servants and slaves are part of the family". Fr. James Clotet reports that a poor woman asked money from Claret to buy a slave. But Claret replied to her categorically, "Dear lady, the Archbishop of Cuba has neither slaves nor money to buy them."

4. WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE ECONOMY WITHOUT SLAVE LABOUR?

1. Oxfam has studied the attitude of certain top food companies towards land, women, farmers, workers, climate, and water'. We can buy goods only from the companies which are eco and poor friendly from this site: [Behind the Brands](#)
2. The things that use things creates demand for slave labour. By using the goods that are tainted with slave labour, we become part of the slave causing chain. We can check our slave footprint here: [Slavery Footprint](#)
3. Purchase fair trade goods adds values to the market. We can know and purchase fair trade products: [End Slavery Now](#)
4. The Survivor of slavery, also produce goods and we can know how to purchase their products: [To The Market Freeset Global](#), and [Shop For Freedom](#)
5. We can add resources to the library with Anti-Trafficking books and documents.
6. We can Reuse and Recycle goods.
7. We can encourage the markets for second-hand goods.
8. Read books related to trafficking such as *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* by Kevin Bales; *Understanding Global slavery* by Kevin Bles.
For More [books click here](#).

5. INTERCESSORY PRAYERS:

Response: *Lord hear the cry of your children.*

1. Lord Jesus you have asked us to pray for the coming of your kingdom. We pray to you to come down and liberate the children, women and men who are kidnapped, sold and abused. May your justice be done on earth as it is in heaven. *Response...*
2. Lord we pray for the survivors of slave trade. Heal their wounds and reintegrate them into society.
3. Lord we pray for those in governance. May they remain ever vigilant to prevent people being smuggled into slave world. May they work sincerely to end the slavery.
4. Lord we pray for the traffickers and all those who are involved in slave trade. In your anger and mercy, convert their hearts. Make them leave this trade, which is a sin against humanity.
5. We pray for ourselves. Give us courage to speak about the misery of those enslaved. Make us generous to place our time, ability and money to liberate the people who suffer in darkness.
6. Lord we pray for those who work to end slavery. Strengthen their hands and make their labour bear fruit.

Concluding Prayer:

Lord Jesus. You opened the doors of freedom for St. Josephine Bakhita. May her story inspire freedom for all those who are enslaved. Inspire us to live a slave labour free life and to promote economy without slavery. Bless our resolve to end slavery and to promote freedom. Amen!



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