

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month & Day of Prayer Toolkit



“Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that’s become ever more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society.”

- Pope Francis



Migration and Refugee Services

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National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

President Obama designated January 2017 as [National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#) by presidential proclamation on December 28, 2016. This month provides an excellent opportunity to increase awareness about human trafficking and trafficking prevention. As noted by the President, “[d]uring National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we resolve to shine a light on every dark corner where human trafficking still threatens the basic rights and freedoms of others.”



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In the upcoming weeks, we encourage you to undertake efforts to raise awareness and educate communities on human trafficking. In doing so, you can also promote best practices to help advance anti-trafficking initiatives.

Day of Prayer

February 8th has been designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General as an annual day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. February 8th is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. She learned from Canossian nuns that she was created in the image of God and possessed human dignity. Once she asserted herself and refused to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian sister and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. She was declared a Saint in 2000.



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano
via Reuters

On February 8th, Catholics all over the world are encouraged to host or attend prayer services to create greater awareness about human trafficking. Through prayer, we not only reflect on the experiences of those that have suffered through this affront to human dignity but also comfort, strengthen, and help empower survivors. As Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, former Chairman of the Committee on Migration, has stated: “On that day, we will lift our voices loudly in prayer, hope, and love for trafficking victims and survivors. If just one person realizes from this day that they or someone they know is being trafficked, we will have made a difference.”

Please find in this toolkit suggestions on how you can celebrate and educate others on National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month and the annual Day of Prayer.

Human Trafficking Background and Overview

Facts about Human Trafficking:

- There are an estimated 21 million victims of [human trafficking worldwide](#), with the majority trapped in situations of labor trafficking.
- Each year, [an estimated 17,500 men, women, and children are trafficked](#) across U.S. borders and forced into slavery.
- Unfortunately, stakeholders have increasingly found that individuals in situations of forced migration, such as refugees and unaccompanied children, are [particularly vulnerable to labor and sex traffickers](#).
- Victim identification remains a significant challenge to U.S. efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and protect victims.

The Church's Position on Human Trafficking:

- The elimination of human trafficking and serving and empowering trafficking survivors is a priority issue for the Catholic Church.
- In 2014, Pope Francis stated during his Declaration on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: “[M]odern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.”

USCCB/MRS Anti-Trafficking Programs and Initiatives:

- For over a decade, USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) has been a leader in the U.S. and global response to human trafficking. It operates an Anti-Trafficking Program to coordinate the response of the U.S. Catholic Church.
- *Education & Outreach:*
AMISTAD: USCCB/MRS created the Amistad Movement to educate and engage immigrant leaders in the fight against human trafficking within communities that are frequently vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation in the United States. The Amistad Movement is intended to empower immigrants through a comprehensive and intensive training program. Click [here](#) to learn more about the AMISTAD program.

SHEPHERD (**S**top **H**uman Trafficking and **E**xploitation, **P**rotect, **H**elp, **E**mpower and **R**estore **D**ignity): USCCB/MRS is continually working to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern day slavery within the American Catholic community. Click [here](#) for more information on requesting the SHEPHERD toolkit.
- *Coalition Building:* Through a cooperative agreement with the Department of State, and in furtherance of its relationship with the Apostleship of the Sea, USCCB/MRS is implementing COMPASS (the Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at

Sea). COMPASS works to strengthen the coordination, collaboration, and capacity of the global Catholic Church’s response to maritime trafficking and labor exploitation, as well as supply chain transparency. Click [here](#) to learn more about the COMPASS initiative.

- *Services for Survivors:* USCCB/MRS provides case management services to foreign-born survivors of trafficking and derivative family members as part of the Trafficking Victims Assistance Program (TVAP) funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). USCCB/MRS serves HHS regions 3 (Delaware, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia) and 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico). Additionally, USCCB/MRS can serve trafficking survivors “anytime, anywhere” through our national per capita service mechanism.



CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass

Talking Points

- As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human life and vehemently oppose human trafficking and modern-day slavery as it contravenes basic human dignity.
- As Pope Francis has stated: “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”
- There are an estimated 21 million victims of human trafficking worldwide. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, including the United States.

- Migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. An estimated 17,500 individuals are trafficked across U.S. borders and forced into slavery each year.
- In Fiscal Year 2016, the Federal Bureau of Investigations opened 1,894 domestic and international trafficking cases and the Department of Homeland Security initiated 1,025 cases.
- Although sex trafficking remains a serious problem, foreign victims are more often found in situations of labor trafficking. In fact, the two largest trafficking cases in the United States involved labor trafficking in Guam and New York.
- In addition to working to eradicate human trafficking, our nation should ensure that victims have the services and support they need to heal, find affordable housing, earn a living wage, and obtain self-sufficiency.



CNS photo/Stringer, EPA

Letters to the Editor Tips

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) is the perfect way to offer your perspective or express your appreciation for an already-published article or commentary piece.

Please let us know if your letter to the editor is published! We will promote it on our social media platforms. Completing this final step in the LTE process helps ensure that your letter's impact is even greater. Email us at MRSTraff@uscgb.org with a link to your published LTE.

Letter to the Editor Writing Tips

- *Keep it short* (150-250 words). If you do not edit your LTE, the news outlet might edit it for you. Since they could cut out your main point, it is best to write something both punchy and brief.
- *Speak in your own voice*. Explain why the article matters to you. Talk about your faith, professional experience, or knowledge of human trafficking. Be personal and authentic.
- *Get local*. Editors are generally more interested in letters that highlight local impacts. Can you relate the issues raised in a national piece on human trafficking to issues impacting your own community?
- *Follow these best practices:*
 - 1) **Reference a recent article (if possible)**. Your letter is most likely to be published if it responds directly to the newspaper's recent coverage of a specific trafficking issue. Mention the article you are responding to by its headline and date of publication.
 - 2) **Send your LTE in the body of your email**, not as an attachment.
 - 3) **Include contact information**. Include your full name, contact information, location, and profession or expertise (if relevant) in the email as well. (The paper will not print your contact information.)
- *Be timely*. Try to get your LTE submitted within 1-3 days after the relevant article is published.

Sample Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Your recent article, *[name of article]*, discussing the issue of *[labor/sex trafficking / supply chain transparency]* expertly highlighted the existence of trafficking and human exploitation in our *[community/country]*. I found this piece particularly timely as January is the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Our *[country/community]* has a proud history of addressing human trafficking, but we can and must do more to ensure that victims are properly identified and assisted. This month serves as an opportunity to not just raise awareness of human trafficking but to commit to redoubling our engagement in meaningful prevention methods. And while we should make this commitment during the month of January, I urge us to remember that prevention and education efforts should be a focus every day of the year.

Sincerely,

OR (when responding to an article with a religious theme or that mentions a bishop or Church leader)

Dear Editor,

Your recent article, *[name of article]*, discussing the issue of human trafficking and human exploitation was *[jarring/uplifting]*. As a Catholic, I understand that human trafficking undermines basic human dignity and inflicts harm upon human life. The prevention of human trafficking and misery is a moral issue and

one that we must come together to advance. Our Catholic community believes that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God. As the Church prepares to celebrate the Day of Prayer for St. Josephine Bakhita on February 8th, I hope my fellow parishioners will take the opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking. Further, I hope that all Catholics will take the opportunity to educate themselves on this form of human suffering so that we can be better positioned to eradicate this terrible crime.

Sincerely,

Anti-Trafficking Social Media Template

Posts for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (January 11):

Twitter:

- January 11th is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. We pray for all victims of trafficking & work to #endtrafficking & #stopslavery

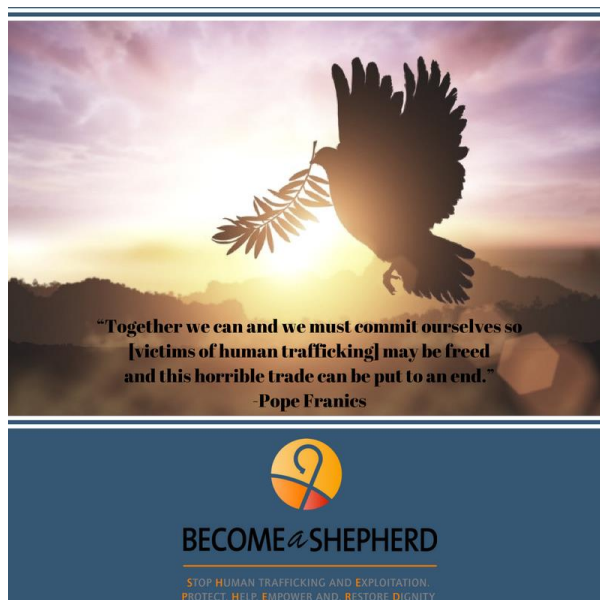
Facebook:

- January 11th has been designated as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Today, we pray for all survivors of trafficking and work to #endtrafficking and #stopslavery. To learn more about the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops / Migration and Refugee Services' Anti-Trafficking Program, visit: <http://bit.ly/1Tcwcda>

HHS Thunderclap:

- Join HHS' [Thunderclap page](#) to amplify the following message on January 11 (Human Trafficking Awareness Day): "It's National #HumanTrafficking Awareness Day. Help us #EndTrafficking! Report a tip (888-373-7888) learn the signs: <http://thndr.me/lca3As>"

Graphic:



Posts for National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month (all of January):

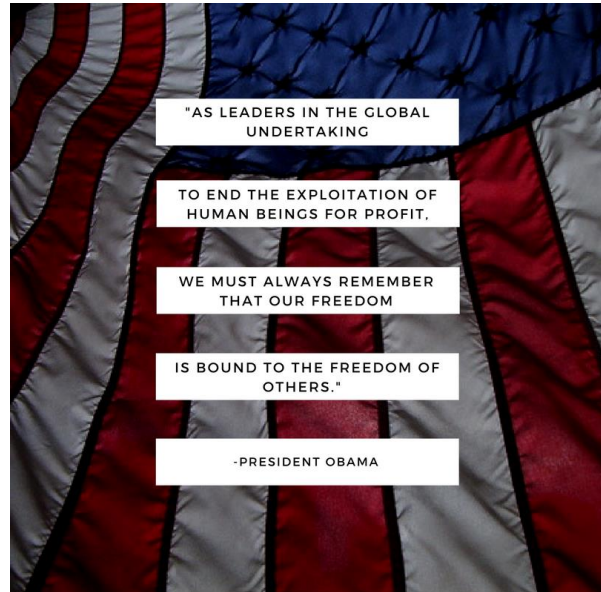
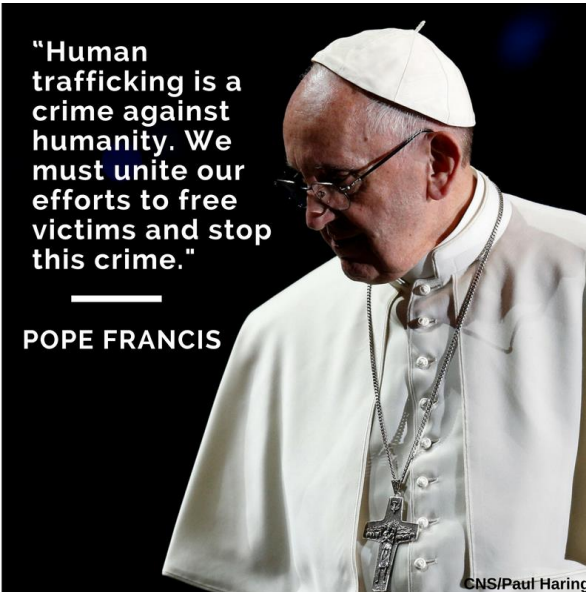
Twitter:

- January is national slavery & #humantrafficking prevention month. Learn about @MRSserves #antitrafficking program at <http://bit.ly/1Tcwcdg>
- In January, we draw attention to #slavery & #humantrafficking. Learn about how you can help by visiting <http://bit.ly/2hAEfXD>

Facebook:

- January has been designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. There are more than 21 million people who have been affected by human trafficking worldwide. To learn more about trafficking and how the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services is helping survivors, visit: <http://bit.ly/2hAEfXD>

Graphics:



Posts for the Day of Prayer (February 8):

Twitter:

Leading up to the Day of Prayer:

- A survivor of kidnapping and #slavery, we celebrate a Day of #Prayer for St. Josephine Bakhita, the Patron Saint of Sudan, on Feb. 8th
- Tomorrow, we will celebrate a Day of #Prayer for Saint Bakhita as we pray for survivors of #humantrafficking and #slavery

On the Day of Prayer:

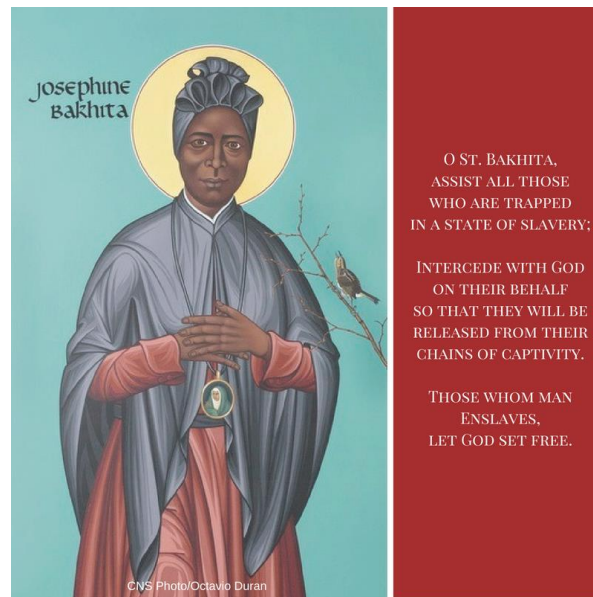
- 70 years ago, St. Bakhita, Patron Saint of Sudan, passed away. Today, we pray for those who have been victims of #slavery & trafficking

- Today, we celebrate a Day of #Prayer for victims of #humantrafficking & #slavery as we celebrate the incredible Saint Bakhita

Facebook:

- St. Bakhita survived slavery and persevered. Once she gained freedom by asserting her human dignity and refusing to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian sister. She dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. In her honor, we recognize today as a Day of #Prayer for victims of #humantrafficking and #slavery
- Many years ago Josephine Bakhita lived as a slave. Years later, St. Bakhita was canonized and is now known as the patron Saint of Sudan. Today, in her honor, we pray for all of those who have been victims of slavery and trafficking

Graphic:



Community Engagement Ideas

- **Learn to be a Responsible Consumer.** Visit the following websites to learn more about which goods may be products of forced or child labor:
 - Slavery Footprint: <http://slaveryfootprint.org/>
 - U.S. Department of Labor (List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor): <https://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods/>
 - U.S. Department of Labor (Sweat & Toil): <https://www.dol.gov/dol/apps/ilab.htm>
 - CRS (Ethical Trade): <http://ethicaltrade.crs.org/>

- **Urge Lawmakers to Reintroduce the “Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015.”** Call both your Senators and your Representative. You can call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or find their direct office lines on their websites at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. Tell them:
 - *I'm your constituent from [city, state], and I care about victims of human trafficking and supply chain transparency.*
 - *I urge you to reintroduce the “Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015.”*
 - *As a consumer, I want to be able to make responsible choices and feel confident that the products I buy are free of forced labor and human trafficking.*

- **Host an Educational Event.** Host a movie night and screen one of the following films in order to further educate your community on human trafficking. See brief synopsis and sample group discussion questions below.
 - ***St. Bakhita:***
 SYNOPSIS: We first meet Bakhita in a rural village of Sudan when she is captured by slave traders. After years of being beaten and abused, a white merchant Federico Marin buys her from her current owner and brings her to Italy. Once in the Marin household, the daughter of the master Aurora takes a strong liking to Bakhita and chooses her as her nanny. Bakhita is treated like an outsider and accused of being wicked by other servants because of her black skin. Despite this, Bakhita proves to be generous to everyone she encounters even if they have wronged her. Befriending a priest, she discovers a life of hope and religious support. The hardest hurdle Bakhita has to overcome is that of acquiring her freedom to help others.

 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
 1. It is not always easy to help others who seem different than us. What can the Bible teach us about overcoming these prejudices based on fear?
 3. How can we be more like Bakhita and work to forgive those who have victimized others and help them see a life of dignity and respect for others?
 4. Sometimes we have to make sacrifices and do things we don't like in order to help others. What are some realistic sacrifices we can make in our daily lives to help the fight against human trafficking?

 - ***Not My Life:***
 SYNOPSIS: This film documents the evil of human trafficking across the globe. There is a specific focus on child exploitation in forced labor, servitude, begging, sex trafficking, and soldier recruitment.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If we suspect human trafficking is occurring in our communities, what actions can we take as bystanders that are both safe and effective?
2. What are some ways that we can provide communities better access to law enforcement and anti-human trafficking resources?
3. How can we improve conflict areas so that victims are less vulnerable to exploitation?

○ **Food Chains:**

SYNOPSIS: How many times a day do you think about where your food comes from? Food Chains brings to light the struggle of Florida farmworkers as they fight the monopoly on the supermarket industry. While the demand for organic and environmentally friendly crops gains increasing popularity, little attention is brought to the workers who actually make this food possible. Many fieldworkers experience exploitation and low wages. This film helps expose the dark side of the food we put on our dinner table. The specific group we see in this film is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in South Florida as they work to protect the dignity of farmworkers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we as consumers help make a difference in the exploitation of farmworkers?
2. What are some things we should be asking of supermarkets and food suppliers to ensure all humans are treated with dignity and respect?
3. How can we bring up the conversation of farmworker exploitation around our own dinner table?
4. How can we relate this national issue to the global issue of labor trafficking?



CNS photo/Nabil Mounzer, EPA

Prayer Card

ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA
1869-1947
MEMORIAL: FEBRUARY 8

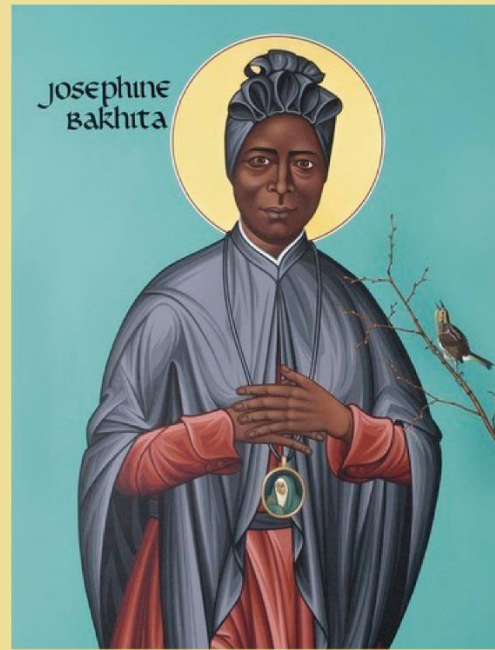
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In October 2000, Josephine Bakhita was canonized by Pope John Paul II, at which point he noted that "in St. Josephine Bakhita we find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation. The history of her life inspires not passive acceptance but the firm resolve to work effectively to free girls and women from oppression and violence, and to return them to their dignity in the full exercise of their rights." (St. Bakhita's Canonization Mass, October 1, 2000)



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ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA



A Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita

St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith. Help all survivors find healing from their wounds. We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

Amen.

Oración a Santa Josefina Bakhita

Santa Josefina Bakhita, cuando niña, fuiste vendida como esclava y tuviste que pasar increíbles dificultades y sufrimiento. Una vez liberada de tu esclavitud física, hallaste la verdadera redención en tu encuentro con Cristo y su Iglesia.

Oh, Santa Bakhita, ayuda a todos aquellos que están atrapados en la esclavitud; en nombre de ellos, intercede ante Dios para que sean liberados de las cadenas de su cautiverio. Que Dios libere a todo aquel que ha sido esclavizado por el hombre.

Bríndales alivio a los que sobreviven la esclavitud y permíte que ellos te vean como modelo de fe y esperanza. Ayuda a todos los sobrevivientes para que encuentren la sanación de sus heridas. Te suplicamos orar e interceder por los que se encuentran esclavizados entre nosotros.

Amén.

Suggested Intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful

Please choose some of the following to be included among the intercessions in your parish during the February 8th Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking:

The Pope, Bishops, and Catholic Faithful

For Pope Francis, that our Heavenly Father may gift him with deep wisdom as he calls the Church to struggle against the evil of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

For our bishop [*name here*], that he may be encouraged by our prayers and support to lead God's people in building a culture that respects human dignity, we pray to the Lord.

For the bishops, that they continue to be leaders in the fight against modern day slavery, both domestically and abroad, we pray to the Lord.

For the bishops, that they continue to make the fight against human trafficking a priority on the national and state level, we pray to the Lord.

For our priests and deacons, that they may boldly proclaim Church teaching on human dignity and the Church's teaching on human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

For our religious brother and sisters, that God inspire them with the continued commitment to fight the evil of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

For all Catholics, that God inspire them to take action in their local communities to support and protect survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking

For everyone who is trapped in a situation of slavery, that God will help to liberate them from their chains, we pray to the Lord.

For an end to human trafficking, that the dignity of all of God's children will be protected, we pray to the Lord.

For those caught up in a situation of slavery, that their perpetrators be brought to justice and that they might find a path to healing, we pray to the Lord.

For survivors of slavery, that God guide them to a path down which they might find wholeness and peace, we pray to the Lord.

For survivors of human trafficking, that they might find the support they need to start a new life, we pray to the Lord.

Government Officials

For the President of the United States, and government leaders, that they continue to work tirelessly to end the slavery that continues to exist in our communities, we pray to the Lord.

For the President of the United States and government leaders, that Jesus, the Son of God, will help them understand the dignity of all human persons and support legislation that better protects vulnerable populations in our midst, we pray to the Lord.

For policy makers in our nation, that God grants them the wisdom to enact laws that provide greater protection for victims and survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

Additional Intercessions

For law enforcement, that God grants them the wisdom to recognize situations of forced labor and sexual slavery, while working to protect its victims and punish its perpetrators, we pray to the Lord.

For the media, that they will make awareness raising of the problem of human trafficking a priority, we pray to the Lord.

For social service providers, that God will grant them the strength and continued commitment to help survivors of human trafficking and support them on their path to wholeness, we pray to the Lord.

For perpetrators of slavery, that they repent of their evil ways and turn to God for forgiveness, we pray to the Lord.

For our neighbors, coworkers, friends, fellow Christians, and all people, that they may increase in their awareness of the problem of human trafficking and become a voice in the public square calling for its abolition, we pray to the Lord.



CNS photo/Ritchie B. Tongo, EPA

Bookmark



**Become *a*
Shepherd**

*Stop **H**uman
Trafficking and
Exploitation.*

***P**rotect, **H**elp,
Empower and,
Restore **D**ignity*