

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

JANUARY 11, 2020



INTRODUCTION:

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and January 11th is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Our prayer at this time is for the millions that are enslaved in the World. Yes, enslaved. Human Trafficking, whether for sexual exploitation or forced labor, is slavery! The ones that are not seen. But we want to be very clear, they are not invisible. People might pass by them daily and not know they are enslaved, you might be sitting in church with them, pass by them at the store, sit next to them in the Emergency Room. Many times, they're called invisible people but they are not invisible, just overlooked.

But the God who created them sees them: as they are trapped in a mine in India, in a brothel in Asia, or as a child being exploited in America after school. They are seen and known by God and many times seen by you and me.

They are seen. And you and I know they are out there so we stand in prayer for their freedom. We raise our voice and stand up for their freedom. Physically, spiritually and mentally we hope for change to happen for them, and pray that the love and hope of Jesus will surround them, wherever they are, and instill a sense of hope. *Adapted from Prayers for Businesses to address slavery in the supply chain by admin on November 12, 2019 in Awareness, Devotional, End Slavery, Freedom, Prayer For Freedom*

SONG CHOICES:

Breaking Bread 2020: Amazing Grace #432, Companions on the Journey # 582, Christ, Be Our Light # 587, Isaiah 49 # 601, Your Grace is Enough #605, Save Us, O Lord #646

Reader: Pascale, at seven years old, works ten hours a day in the mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He digs, sifts, cleans and dries minerals which become components of electronics. The other miners mock him since he works, diligently and silently, never asking for a wage. Pascale once thought he would earn enough money to buy a coat, but since working at the mine, he has never touched a Congolese Franc. All he receives is a little bit of food from other miners.

(Taken from www.ipjc.org)

Psalm 88

Unison:

Save me, Lord my God!
By day, by night, I cry out.
Let my prayer reach you;
Turn, listen to me.

I am steeped in trouble,
Ready for the grave.
I am like one destined for the pit,
a warrior deprived of strength,
forgotten among the dead.



Reader: When Tonya was 13, she met Eddie at the apartment complex where she was living with her mother. Tonya was a classmate of Eddie's stepdaughter, so the

two would often see each other at the apartment and in the local grocery store. It was there that Eddie and Tonya first exchanged numbers.

Tonya thought Eddie was cute. He was flirtatious with Tonya. They had a casual relationship until Tonya was 15 when they reconnected after Tonya ran away from home. It was then that they began a more serious relationship and eventually Tonya moved in with Eddie. It was a “normal” relationship at first with Tonya taking care of the house and Eddie’s younger children. She began partying with Eddie, drinking and taking drugs. At some point, Eddie asked her to have sex with a man at one of the parties. She didn’t want to, but Eddie told her, “If you love me, you’ll do this. It’s just one thing. Just try it.” Under pressure from Eddie, Tonya relented and did what she was asked.

After this one night Tonya spent night after night in different hotel rooms, with different men, all at the command of someone she trusted and loved. She was held against her will, beaten and made to feel like she had no other option, all by the man she thought she loved and who loved her. She felt she deserved it and that the emotional and physical abuse she endured was of her own doing.

Help eventually came for Tonya in the form of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations Special Agent Keith Owens after the police department received a tip about Eddie’s suspected crimes. *(Taken and adapted from the Official Website of the Department of Homeland Security)*

Psalm 116

I am filled with love,
for the Lord hears me;
the Lord bends to my voice
whenever I call.

Death had me in its grip,
the grave’s trap was set,
grief held me fast.
I cried out for God,
“Please, Lord, rescue me!”

God rescues me from death,
wiping my tears,
steadying my feet.
I walk with the Lord
in this land of the living.



Intercessions: “Catholic social teaching proclaims the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of all human life. Each person is made in the image of God, is loved immeasurably by Him, and has inherent worth. Every person is precious, people are more important than possessions, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. Because every life is a gift from God and is sacred, it deserves to be protected and nurtured; we each have a responsibility to fight against the violation and degradation of our brothers and sisters.

Modern-day slavery—where men, women, and children are bought and sold like merchandise—inherently rejects this principle, showing absolute contempt for human beings. For this reason, eliminating human trafficking and empowering survivors has been a historic concern of the Catholic Church.” And so, we pray

- That God will reveal ways for those living in forced labor and those being exploited sexually to find *freedom* and *healing*.

Loving God, hear us

- That each of us will bring awareness to the issue of forced labor and sexual exploitation throughout the world resulting in *freedom* for all.

Loving God, hear us

- That world leaders will address practices that keep others enslaved by enacting laws and *changing* the culture where slavery in all its forms is accepted.

Loving God, hear us

- That law enforcement will actively seek to *free* those entrapped in modern day slavery from their traffickers and prosecute the perpetrators.

Loving God, hear us

- That business leaders will commit to assuring that a just wage and healthy working conditions are provided to ALL employees working to provide goods and services to their companies.

Loving God, hear us

- That each of us will educate ourselves and others and take care to use ethical standards when buying and selling products.

Loving God, hear us

- That all people will take responsibility for reporting suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities.

Loving God, hear us

Hear these our prayers and plant in our hearts a strong commitment to abolish slavery in all its forms. Amen. *Adapted from Prayers for Businesses to address slavery in the supply chain by admin on November 12, 2019 in Awareness, Devotional, End Slavery, Freedom, Prayer For Freedom*

RITUAL: Light a candle in honor of the victims, survivors and their loved ones. Play soft music as you pray for each of those affected by this horrible crime. (Spend a few minutes in silence.)

Reader: It will take the commitment of all God's people to put an end to the exploitation of human beings throughout the world. We have spent time reflecting and praying and now we take time to make a commitment to do our part in the fight against human trafficking.

In order to be ready should the occasion arise, you are asked to take out your phone. During the next few minutes take the time to add the number for the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** to your contacts. As you add this number pray that you and others will have the wisdom and courage to call this number to report suspicious activity related to human trafficking.



Contact: National Human Trafficking Hotline Call
1-888 – 373-7888

or

Text “BeFree” (233733)



Let us conclude our prayer by praying “A Prayer for the End of Human Trafficking”

God of freedom, beauty and truth
we believe that your deepest desire,
your most powerful energy,
is that all creation might know abundant life.
We raise our voices in anguished prayer
for our sisters and brothers,
women and girls, men and boys,
who are modern day slaves;
They are your beloved daughters and sons,
exploited sexually or forced to work
because of human violence and greed.
Fill us with your holy anger and your sacred passion
that those who are trafficked might know healing and justice;
that traffickers will come to repentance and conversion;
that all of us might live in such a way
that others are not made to pay the price
for our comfort and convenience.
Hasten the coming of the day when all people
and our precious Earth itself
will be treated, not as a commodity,
but as radiant images of your freedom, beauty and truth.



*For additional
resources visit
Justfreedom.org*

Amen. May it be so. *Written by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station*

