

**February 4, 2018**

**ISSUE: Human Trafficking**

Today, millions will gather around their televisions to cheer on their favorite team during Super Bowl LII which is being played in Minneapolis, MN. While most of us will be celebrating the event with family and friends, many young women and men will be trafficked to the city for the purpose of sexual exploitation at the hands of their pimps. In 2017, U.S. police arrested at least 750 people in sex trafficking sting operations timed to coincide with the Super Bowl.

**TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:**

Genesis 4:9 “Where is your brother?”

How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labor? Let us not look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think. The issue involves everyone! This infamous network of crime is now well established in our cities, and many people have blood on their hands as a result of their comfortable and silent complicity. (11/24/13, no. 211) *Pope Francis*

The mission of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP) is to educate on the scourge of human trafficking as an offense against fundamental dignity of the human person, to advocate for an end to modern day slavery and to provide training and technical assistance on this issue.

**ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:**

Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free the victims and stop this increasingly aggressive crime which threatens not only individuals but **also** the basic values of society and of international security and justice, to say nothing of the economy, and the fabric of the family and our coexistence. (12/12/13) *Pope Francis*

Pray - February 8, 2018 - International Day of Prayer **against** and **awareness of human trafficking** (Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, 'Mother Moretta', a Sudanese nun who bore 144 physical scars throughout her life which were received after she was kidnapped at the age of nine and sold into slavery).

Donate: Catholic Fund against Human Trafficking

**MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/>

**February 11, 2018**

**ISSUE: Human Trafficking**

Human **trafficking** is a stain on society that undermines our desire for a safer more humane world. No person can feel justified in ignoring this crime which has millions of victims and generates billions of dollars for criminals. There are nearly 21 million victims of human trafficking worldwide and traffickers are estimated to make more than \$150 billion off of human suffering every year.

Every day, a teen is tricked into forced prostitution; a man travels great distances for the promise of a job only to be deceived into forced labor. More tragic, still, a child sold into sexual slavery sometimes has their organs sold.

**TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:**

Isaiah 1:17: Learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphans, plead for the widow.

Every human being — man, woman, boy and girl — is the image of God; God, who is love and freedom, gives himself through interpersonal relations; therefore every human being is a free person, destined to live for the good of others in equality and brotherhood. Every person and all people are equal and their freedom and dignity must be recognized. (12/2/14) *Pope Francis*

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**ACTION:** What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

What is called for, then, is a shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will to gain victory on this front. Responsibility is required towards those who have fallen victim to trafficking in order to protect their rights, to guarantee their safety and that of their families, and to prevent the corrupt and criminals from escaping justice and having the last word over the lives of others. Suitable legislative intervention in the countries of origin, transit and arrival, which will also facilitate orderly migration, can diminish this grave problem. (12/12/13) *Pope Francis*

**Become a Shepherd** ([www.usccb.org/become-a-shepherd-tool-kit](http://www.usccb.org/become-a-shepherd-tool-kit))

## **MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/>

February 18, 2018

## **ISSUE: Human Trafficking**

She told her story to Pope Francis in July at the Vatican, and to the U.S. Congress in May. Karla, a human trafficking survivor, states she was befriended by a trafficker who lured her away with kind words, a nice car and a piece of candy. Karla was age 12 at the time. Thereafter, she was beaten, burned with an iron, and raped by up to 30 men a day, seven days a week for almost four years. She estimates a total of 43,200 times. She also became pregnant and had a child at age 15. Karla states her baby was used as a pawn to keep her in submission. Karla was finally rescued in 2008 during an anti-trafficking operation. Although only age 16 at the time, she has endured several lifetimes of horror. (Source: CNN.com 09/20/17)

## **TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:**

**Psalm 82:3:** Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

In the episode of Naboth's vineyard, Jezebel, the queen, in an unscrupulous manner, decides to eliminate Naboth and puts her plan into action. . . This is not a story of former times, it is also a story of today, of the powerful who, in order to have more money, exploit the poor, exploit people. It is the story of the trafficking of people, of slave labor, of poor people who work "under the table" and for a minimal wage, thus enriching the powerful. It is the story of corrupt politicians who want more and more! **This is why it would be good** for us to read St Ambrose's book about Naboth, because this text is relevant to modern day. . . . That is where the exercise of authority without respect for life, without justice, without mercy leads. And that is where the thirst for power leads: it becomes greed that wants to own everything. (2/24/16) *Pope Francis*

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## **ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:**

Pray - Ascent 121 Prayer Journey Program. Groups drive through the **city** of Indianapolis and pray for areas affected by trafficking and exploitation. **Be observant. Identify** victims in your

community and respond appropriately. (See Red Flags and Screening Questions to Identify Victims at [www.USCCB.org/about/Anti-Trafficking-Program](http://www.USCCB.org/about/Anti-Trafficking-Program))  
Human Trafficking Hotline - 1-888-373-7888

## **MORE INFORMATION:**

[www.ascent121.org](http://www.ascent121.org).

February 25, 2018

### **ISSUE: Human Trafficking**

Labor trafficking is a form of modern day slavery in which individuals perform labor or services through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Labor trafficking includes situations of debt bondage, forced labor and involuntary child labor.

### **TEACHING: What the Church teaches, is in scripture or is the position of the Archdiocese or USCCB:**

Deuteronomy 27:19 : "Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

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Sustained by the ideals of our confessions of faith and by our shared human values, we all can and must raise the standard of spiritual values, common effort and the vision of freedom to eradicate slavery from our planet. (12/2/14) *Pope Francis*

### **ACTION: What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:**

I invite everyone, in accordance with his or her specific role and responsibilities, to practice acts of fraternity towards those kept in a state of enslavement. Let us ask ourselves, as individuals and as communities, whether we feel challenged when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others. (12/8/14) *Pope Francis*

Be an ethical consumer and employer. Find out how your actions can contribute to or reduce the demand for human trafficking. Human Trafficking Hotline - 1-888-373-7888

**MORE INFORMATION:**

[www.ecpatusa.org](http://www.ecpatusa.org)

[www.usccb.org/stopslavery.](http://www.usccb.org/stopslavery)