



Prayer Service for an End to Human Trafficking

January is Human Trafficking
Awareness Month

Opening song: "We are called"

O God, you give peace and desire justice for all people, hear our prayers for our enslaved Sisters and Brothers around the world. Our hearts ache for what our minds can barely comprehend, particularly when we hear of persons who are deceived and coerced into sexual and economic exploitation due to human greed, profit and power.

Reading: Exodus 21: 111

Reader1

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2011 (S.1301) introduced in 2000, greatly increased America's efforts to protect victims, assist survivors, improve prevention methods, and successfully prosecute traffickers. It was reauthorized three times by bipartisan majorities, but was allowed to expire in September 2011 leaving an infinite number of survivors without much needed assistance.

"Society must transform definitions of masculinity, male attitudes toward women and sexuality, and create programs for boys and men as well as women to eliminate the demand for trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes." *Florence Deacon, OSF*

Response: Enlighten traffickers and violators so as to be transformed and touch their hearts so they see the love and dignity in each person they meet.

Reader2

The Internet and new technologies have also transformed the landscape of human trafficking. Traffickers use social media and other online tools to recruit victims, mostly children and young adults, through coercion for commercial sex exploitation.

Response: Enlighten traffickers and violators so as to be transformed and touch their hearts so they see the love and dignity in each person they meet.



Reader1

Every year at least 1.2 million youngsters under 18 years of age are sold into some form of slave labor. There are 211 million child laborers, between the ages of 5 and 14. Of these, 171 million work in risky conditions. About 120 million children work fulltime. *Fides, the News Agency for the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Jan. 2006.*

Response: Enlighten traffickers and violators so as to be transformed and touch their hearts so they see the love and dignity in each person they meet.

Reader2

Men and women come to the U.S. to look for work to support their families back home. Often trafficking “recruiters” offer them jobs in the fields picking tomatoes and other vegetables. Once on the job, they are forced to work extremely long hours. They are threatened that they will be beaten if they stop to take a break and that they will be reported to immigration if they attempt to leave.



Response: Enlighten traffickers and violators so as to be transformed and touch their hearts so they see the love and dignity in each person they meet.

Reader1

Transnational and domestic gangs have recently expanded from trafficking guns and drugs to trafficking human beings. Transnational gangs use cross border tunnels to move not only guns and drugs, but also human beings, from Mexico into California. Domestic street gangs set aside traditional rivalries to set up commercial sex rings and maximize profits from the sale of young women. The perpetrators of human trafficking have become more sophisticated and organized. Women and children are at risk more than ever in becoming trafficked victims.

Response: Enlighten traffickers and violators so as to be transformed and touch their hearts so they see the love and dignity in each person they meet.

Reflection

As sisters and brothers, we are tormented by this reality that will leave devastating repercussions for generations to come. Our hearts grieve for what our minds can barely

comprehend, particularly when we hear of women, men, and children who are deceived and transported to unknown places.

Leader

Lord, open our ears to the cries of women, men and children who have been denied their rights and their dignity, who are enslaved for the profit and use of others. Give us wisdom that we may know how best to serve and empower us to take action and become instruments of your peace so that the violence and exploitation against our Sisters and Brothers ends. Comfort all those wounded in this violent crime and embrace them as they attempt to find healing.



All:

Lord, give us the courage to stand up and fight for the rights of our Sisters and Brothers who live in slavery and exploitation. Guide us the strength as we pray and take action to free your enslaved children. Amen

Closing song: "We are called"

*Author: Maria Elena Perales from the Southern CA Partners for Global Justice.
Stories adapted from Change.Org/ Polaris Project/ CAST/ Stop Trafficking Newsletter/
Kamala D. Harris CA Attorney General*