



Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that's become even more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society, international security and laws, the economy, families and communities.
Pope Francis



St Josephine Bakhita

Chairman of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life, Bishop Terry Brady said, 'In marking the Bakhita Day of prayer and fasting in this Year of Mercy, Australia's Catholics should be mindful of Pope Francis' challenge to stop human trafficking. We can all commit to learning more about human trafficking. We can commit to helping victims of human trafficking. And we can commit to tackling the systems that enable human trafficking to flourish.'

Day of Prayer and Reflection on Human Trafficking

February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. Once Josephine was freed, she dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery, and comforting the poor and suffering.

The idea for this day came after a group of women religious asked Pope Francis to raise greater awareness in the church about human trafficking by establishing a worldwide day of prayer and fasting.

Sr Anne Tormey rsm, President of ACRATH, comments, "our prayer on this day becomes one of lamentation for the millions of women, children and men trafficked across the globe for human slavery ... this day can be an opportunity to learn about trafficking globally and locally, to pray for the victims of human trafficking and for an end to slavery, to commit to buying Fairtrade products where possible and to advocate for legislation to protect victims of human trafficking."

More information on Bakhita Day and on counter trafficking work is available at www.acrath.org.au

In an address to new ambassadors to the Vatican, Pope Francis called for more cooperation and effective strategies, a common sense of responsibility and "a more decisive political will" to stop trafficking.

He said "more needs to be done to help victims, to protect their rights and safety, and to stop the corrupt and the criminal from evading justice".

"Adequate legislative measures in countries of origin, transit and destination, including facilitating legal immigration, can reduce the problem."

Pope Francis 12 December 2013

ACTIONS:

LEARN about human trafficking – globally and locally

PRAY for victims of trafficking and for an end to this slavery

DEMAND slave-free products. Buy FAIRTRADE when possible.

ADVOCATE for state and federal legislation that protects victims

Reading

Leader: Let us begin by observing a moment of silence in solidarity with all the women, men and children who suffer each day from modern day slavery. [Moment of Silence]

Leader: Each person forced into slavery has a personal story...a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Let us listen to the story of Bakhita, a survivor of human trafficking.

Reader 1: St. Josephine Bakhita was born in southern Sudan in 1869. As a young girl, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Sold and resold in the markets of El Obeid and Karthoum, she was treated brutally by her captors. She did not remember the name she was given by her parents. Bakhita, which means “fortunate one” was the name given to her by her kidnappers.

Reader 2: In 1883, she was bought by an Italian diplomat who sent her to Italy to work as a maid for the daughter of a family friend studying with the Canossian Daughters of Charity. It was there that Bakhita came to know about God whom “she had experienced in her heart without knowing” who God was. In 1890, she was baptised and received the name Josephine.

Reader 3: Later, the Italian family came to take their “property” back to Africa. Josephine expressed her desire to stay. When the family insisted she go, she remained firm, later writing: “I am sure the Lord gave me strength at that moment.” With the support of the superior of the Canossian Sisters and the Cardinal of Venice, she won her freedom and later entered the novitiate. For the next 50 years she lived a life of prayer and service as a Canossian Sister before her death in 1947. St. Josephine was canonised in 2000. There is a grassroots movement to designate her as the patron saint of kidnapped and trafficked persons.

Intercessory Prayer

Leader *Let us pray together that God’s justice will break forth in our time.*

1. We pray for Christian communities around the world: that they will be strengthened to address the issues of human trafficking. God of mercy, hear us.
Response: God of mercy, let justice break forth.
2. We pray for world leaders: that they will dedicate their time, energy and resources to eradicating human trafficking. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**
3. We pray for those in forced labour, in agriculture, mines and factories: that they will no longer be reduced to tools for production and commodities, but be treated with human dignity. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**
4. We pray for women who make up the majority of victims of human trafficking: that changes in societal attitudes will foster their equality and dignity. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**
5. We pray for the development of impoverished nations: that their peoples may know a decent standard of living and have meaningful opportunities for education and employment, and thus escape the desperate circumstances that make people vulnerable to human trafficking. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**
6. We pray that the demand for trafficked people will disappear: that Australians will commit to look for goods and services that are slavery-free. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**
7. We pray for N who died recently, and for all who have died as a result of their exploitation and slavery. God of mercy, hear us. **Response**

Leader *Gracious and loving God, awaken our hearts and deepen our commitment to work for a world where all people are able to live with dignity and freedom. Give us wisdom and courage so that together we will find ways to ensure your freedom is the gift for all people. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

More information? www.acrath.org.au