



Prayer Vigil

"Together against Human Trafficking!"

8 February 2019

This proposed Prayer Vigil can be complemented with song and dance.

Prayer (Pope Francis, 12 February 2018)

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.

Narrator 1: Today, let us together celebrate the fifth World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking.

Narrator 2: "Certainly there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience; because it is thorny; because it is shameful." (Pope Francis, 12 February 2018)

Narrator 1: Faced with this odious crime which is so widespread and organized, we can't do it alone!!! We feel like we can go faster when we act alone, but in fact we get lost in the selfishness, discouragement, isolation that destroys our lives. This renders us powerless in the face of the fact that tens of millions of people are exploited and enslaved.

Narrator 2: Only **together** can we walk the long road to freedom, promote the dignity of every person, only **together** can we fulfil our potential as persons, **together**, as sisters and brothers, daughters and sons of the same Father. Yes, "Together, against trafficking"!

People with their faces painted white or with white masks and dressed the same enter (such as in jeans and a T-shirt or black trousers and a T-shirt). As they come in, they carry a map of the world and the 5 candles with bows or coloured cloths of the continents. The candles will be placed in a place that can be seen by everyone.

They set down the candles and the world map, and people come in with posters with the following words:

- *There have never been as many slaves in history as there are today.*
- *72% of those trafficked are women*
- *30% of trafficked persons are girls and boys*
- *Human trafficking happens in every country in the world*
- *Illegal profits from sexual exploitation is equal to two-thirds of the profit from human trafficking overall.*
- *Iara, 13, was trafficked into a forced marriage.*
- *Karim is 8 years old and is one of the many children trafficked and exploited in the textile industry.*
- *Jamil, got into debt trying to feed his family. Threatened, he gave a kidney to pay the debt.*

The people who came in with the posters stop and stand at different points of the hall and read what is written on their poster.

Narrator 1: Let us join our voices to the cries of anguish of so many of our sisters and brothers, let us reach out to them and go beyond our world, to break down the barriers that we have built and that divide us. Let us together find the courage to move beyond ourselves and undertake the concrete path of solidarity. Together, as members of the one human family to which we belong.

Narrator 2: We pray with our brothers and sisters who suffer the violence of trafficking and together we proclaim (*Psalm 13*):

All together: How long, Lord, will you continue to forget about us?

Reader 1: How long will you forget our pain, our chains, our dream of living and working with dignity, our desire to study, to be respected?

Reader 2: How long will you hide your face from us, with the arrogance of those who exploit us and in the indifference of those who do not want to see?

All together: How long, Lord, will you continue to forget about us?

Reader 3: How long will the thoughts and worries that make our days sad weigh down our souls?

Reader 4: How long will those who treat us badly keep us in subjugation?

All together: How long, Lord, will we continue to forget you about us? How long, Lord, will we continue to forget about you, about your love?

Narrator 1: We will now listen to witnesses that help us understand the importance of joining forces and acting together against human trafficking. At the end of each witness we will all say, hand in hand: Together we can fight against people trafficking.

Witness 1: *Creation of territorial networks (Benin)*

All together, holding hands: Together we can fight human trafficking.

Witness 2: *World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Trafficking*

All together, holding hands: Together we can fight human trafficking.

Witness 3: *REPAM Pan-Amazonian Network (reference to missionary month)*

All together, holding hands: Together we can fight human trafficking

These examples can be complemented or replaced with local experiences.

Reader 1: Teach us to look at our world with eyes full of compassion and mercy.

Reader 2: Teach us to have the courage not to surrender to those whose words are full of hatred, violence and death.

All together, hand in hand: Together we can oppose the trafficking of people.

Reader 3: We trust in your commitment; your Word gives us the courage to dare. Our hearts rejoice with joy for your salvation, our God.

Reader 4: O Lord, let us sing to you, he who has shown us the path to freedom and goodness.

All together, hand in hand: Together we can oppose human trafficking.

Narrator 1: Together, we can combat human trafficking. That is why we are called to build communities, spaces of encounter among ourselves, both with our neighbours and with those who are distant. The Word of God calls us together, unites us and enlightens us.

A Biblical Reading can be chosen from the following:

- Genesis 37 (Entire chapter, the story of Joseph)
- Exodus 3:1-12 (Moses' vocation)
- Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)
- Luke 4:14-21 (The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...)

Silent Meditation

(if you want, you can add a short meditation of about 5 minutes)

Narrator 2: We are now invited to organize into small groups, each group will have one of the guidelines that Pope Francis suggests for a common commitment against trafficking. The groups will have 5 minutes. At the end of the group work, a representative of the group will come to the altar, light a candle and share a word or message of hope that has emerged from the group discussion.

Some people distribute the notes with the point of the guidelines that the group is meant to share. At the end, when all the groups have shared and lit a candle, the Narrator will invite you to recite the Our Father. As s/he speaks, the characters with white faces and skeins of coloured threads return and we begin to wind them around the assembly, weaving a large net... This action will continue throughout the time in prayer.

Narrator 1: Prayer unites us, brings us closer together, makes us sisters and brothers, helps us to overcome divisions, fears and frees us from evil. Let us pray, together, with the words that Jesus taught us, which enable us to discover that we are sisters and brothers in God.

Narrator 2: During the prayer, let us allow the coloured threads to wind through us, intertwining our lives, our beings, into a great network of solidarity:

All together:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Reader 1: Deliver us from all forms of exploitation.

Deliver us from evil.

Reader 2: Deliver us from racial discrimination.

All: Deliver us from evil.

Reader 3: Deliver us from our greed to possess.

All: Deliver us from evil.

Reader 4: Deliver us from the sense of superiority and the desire to dominate.

All: Deliver us from evil.

You can continue with spontaneous invocations, using a litany form of prayer.

Narrator 1: O Lord, deliver us from every evil, and grant us peace and freedom.

With the help of your mercy, we will live as sisters and brothers. Together, with your support, we commit ourselves to build a world in which everyone is respected in their dignity, offering simple gestures of hope and solidarity.

All together: Amen.

Narrator 2: We have prayed together for an end to human trafficking. Let us continue, together, to commit ourselves and to collaborate so that every woman, man, child and child may be recognized and respected in their dignity and may and should each of us here present find the courage to feel responsible for one another.

Narrator 1: Let us recite the **concluding prayer** together (Etty Hillesum):

All together:

Dear God, these are anxious times.

One thing is becoming increasingly clear to me: that You cannot help us, that we must help You to help ourselves.

And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves. And perhaps in others as well.

Alas, there doesn't seem to be much You Yourself can do about our circumstances, about our lives. Neither do I hold You responsible. You cannot help us, but we must help You and defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last.