



*International Day of Prayer and
Awareness Against Human Trafficking*
An economy without human trafficking





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February 8, 2021

Scripture

Luke 4:18-19

"The Spirit of our God is upon me: because the Most High has anointed me to bring good news to those who are poor. God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those who are held captive, recovery of sight to those who are blind, and release to those in prison — to proclaim the year of our God's favour."

Reflection

A major driver of human trafficking is neoliberalism, the dominant economic model of our time. It relentlessly promotes the assumption that creating wealth for those businesses and individuals who are already well-off will "trickle down" to those in greatest need. Over and over again, this has proven to be false. The rich see immense gains in their wealth while those who are poor continue to struggle against ever-greater odds. Under this model, there are currently more people trafficked and in slavery than ever in history. And the profits derived from the victims of human trafficking are enormous, especially in the sectors of mining, agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing, construction, domestic work, prostitution, and organ transplants.

Pope Francis has implored us to “promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature”.* If we accept this invitation and open ourselves to living more simply and compassionately, and to challenging our economic and political leaders, our economic models may finally begin to eliminate the differences between privilege and poverty. If we choose not to accept this invitation, the liberation of the oppressed that Jesus calls for in Luke's Gospel will be difficult, if not impossible, to be realized.

*(*Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis, #215, 2015.)*

Music

“Can You See Me?” <https://youtu.be/3lV4zTVQLdU>

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Silent Reflection

What touched your heart

- as you reflected on the sculpture of St. Bakhita rescuing the captives, or
- listened to the Gospel passage and the reflection, or
- absorbed the sentiments of the song?

What commitment can you make to help “proclaim liberty to those who are held captive”?

Gesture of Commitment

You are invited to light a candle as a sign of your commitment to see and help to free those who are oppressed through human trafficking and slavery.

Closing Prayer

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 people enslave, 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.

(Pope Francis, 2018)