

# Prayer Service for an End to Human Trafficking

*Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita, February 8*

**Setting:** Put a cloth and a bell on the ritual table.

**Opening Song:** Select a song, such as *City of God*.

**Leader:** Pope Francis' 2015 World Day of Peace Message is entitled, "No Longer Slaves, But Brothers and Sisters." He calls us to remember that all peoples are our family, and together, we need to cry out and act to end the human trafficking of our brothers and sisters.

**Reader 1:** "We ought to recognize that we are facing a global phenomenon which exceeds the competence of any one community or country. In order to eliminate it, we need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself. For this reason I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will... not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters."

—Pope Francis

**Reader 2:** St. Josephine Bakhita was sold into slavery as a young girl, but through her encounter with God, courageously gained her freedom. Her life is recognized as a beacon of hope in the dark world of slavery. Through her intercession, we pray...



*Trafficking survivor Gina has big dreams with support from the Red Window Project*

Creative Commons

**All:** We pray that the people enslaved around the world will be set free, physically and mentally. We pray that God's daughters and sons, our sisters and brothers, will be brought into a place of comfort and refuge.

**Reader 2:** Flor was working two jobs in Mexico to support her three children. When her sewing teacher approached her with a seamstress job in the US, she thought it would be a great opportunity. But when they arrived, she and her teacher were taken to a factory and forced to work long hours, beginning each day at 4 AM. Their documents were taken from them, and Flor had to stay and clean the factory when everyone else went home.

**Reader 3:** When their fishing nets, the tool for their livelihood, fell into disrepair, Kieu's family contacted a loan shark since they did not have the \$200 needed to fix them. The lender's exorbitantly high interest rates quickly increased their debt to about \$9,000. The family turned to the commonly-used community practice of "virgin selling." After obtaining a "certificate of virginity" for Kieu from the hospital, her mother sold her to a man at a hotel. She was 12 years old. —Cambodia

**Reader 4:** Pascale, at seven years old, works ten hours a day in the mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He digs, sifts, cleans and dries minerals which become components of electronics. The other miners mock him since he works diligently and silently, never asking for a wage. Pascale once thought he would earn enough money to buy a coat, but since working at the mine, he has never touched a Congolese Franc. All he receives is little bits of food from other miners.



**Leader:** Together, we pray the words of Amos with courage and hope.

**All:** *Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* —Amos 5:24

*[After each intention has been read, ring the bell as a sign of hope for the people for whom we are praying.]*

**Leader:** We pray...

**Reader 1:** For all the children, women and men enslaved around the world today, on farm fields, the street, in mines, factories, restaurants, salons, brick-making kilns, plantations, houses, hotels and more. For all those who are trapped by the mental and physical bindings of debt, poverty, fraud and coercion.

**Response:** *Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

**Reader 2:** For all the people who are vulnerable to being trafficked because they are in desperate situations due to poverty, war,

**Leader:** Let us take a few moments to think about one action we can take to work for justice for our sisters and brothers who are trafficked. *[Pause for Quiet Reflection]*

**Leader:** I invite anyone who wishes to share an action s/he will take. *[Pause for Responses]*

**Leader:** Let us pray,

**All:** God of justice and healing waters, we pray for all children, women and men who are enslaved around the world today. Give them a life of true freedom. Soften the hearts of their traffickers. And give us the courage to continue to work to end the demand for human trafficking and increase justice for our sisters and brothers. Amen.

Play/sing a closing song, such as *We Shall Overcome*.

### Take Action:

- ☞ Join world religious leaders by signing their declaration to end slavery by 2020: [www.globalfreedomnetwork.org](http://www.globalfreedomnetwork.org)
- ☞ Before you buy, check to see if your purchases were made using forced labor: [www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com)
- ☞ For upcoming sporting events, write to coaches, athletes, hotels and/or sponsors about human trafficking: [iccr.org/resources/2012/CelebrationWithoutExploitationToolkit.pdf](http://iccr.org/resources/2012/CelebrationWithoutExploitationToolkit.pdf)
- ☞ See how many slaves are working for you: [www.slaveryfootprint.org](http://www.slaveryfootprint.org)
- ☞ For more education and action resources: [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)
- ☞ Think you know of a case of human trafficking?  
Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline:  
1-888-3737-888

*Remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt.*

—Deuteronomy 15:15

