

MISSIONARY OBLATES JPIC



Solidarity With Victims of Trafficking

"Therefore, we declare on each and every one of our creeds that modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.." (Pope Francis -- *Declaration on International Day for the Abolition of Slavery*, Dec. 2, 2014)



Human Trafficking: A 21st Century Scourge

Modern slavery, also known as human trafficking is 'the illegal trade in people for exploitation or commercial gain.' It is the second largest criminal activity today, second only to the illegal drug trade, and it is growing. An estimated 20.9 million people worldwide are trafficked at any given time according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). Poverty and lack of opportunity are significant contributors but also social exclusion, gender discrimination, political conflicts and environmental displacement. Incidents have increased worldwide due to root causes combined with high demand in developing countries.

The two primary forms of trafficking are labor and the sex. Women and girls made up 70% of detected human trafficking victims between 2010-2012. (UNICEF) In 2014 in the U.S., an estimated 1 out of 6 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were child sex trafficking victims.

Labor trafficking, is an estimated \$150 billion dollar industry worldwide. Traffickers use violence, threats, deception, and other manipulative tactics to force people to provide labor or services against their will. Common industries that hire victims include agriculture, food processing, construction, manufacturing and domestic work.

Forced labor and human trafficking in the fishing industry is nothing new but incidents in recent years have escalated due to globalization, heavy competition, and the mobility of migrant workers. The fishing sector and global supply chains of agriculture have been cited for both abuse and promising efforts to fight the problem. In 2015 an investigation of Thailand, the world's third-largest seafood exporter, found that Thai fishing vessels not only fish illegally but use bonded, forced and slave labor to keep the costs down. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) broadly defines the fisheries industry as one of the world's largest employers today, with 38 million workers including fishers, fish farmers and those supplying services and goods to them.

In one strategy to address this problem, the US Congress introduced H.R.3226 - *Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015*. Missionary Oblates JPIC joined groups like US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking and Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) in urging their networks to advocate for this bill by calling and sending letters to their members of Congress. We will continue to monitor the issue and look for ways to act on behalf of victims.

Connect with Missionary Oblates JPIC

The Oblate JPIC initiative works to promote human dignity and respect for God's creation using an ethic of consistent life. We work through our faith-consistent investment principles, advocacy with corporations and governments, educational outreach, grassroots organizing (in Oblate parishes), and financial support for campaigning organizations.

Take Action for Trafficked Victims

- Urge the US Congress to Protect Human Dignity and Combat Human Trafficking! Visit the Catholics Confront Global Poverty website to send a message to your US Member of Congress on this issue:
<http://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/issues/stop-human-trafficking/>

Facebook: Missionary Oblates JPIC

Twitter: @omiusaJPIC

Blog: <http://missionary-oblates-jpic.blog.com>

YouTube:
www.youtube.com/OMIJPIC

“We must unite our efforts to free the victims and stop this increasingly aggressive crime which threatens not only individuals, but the basic values of society and of international security and justice, to say nothing of the economy, and the fabric of the family and our coexistence.” – *(Pope Francis, December 12, 2013 in his address to new ambassadors to the Holy See)*

The World's Response

Governments around the world, the United Nations and faith groups are actively working to help victims and prevent the spread of this problem.

The United Nations works through its Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to address this issue.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services runs a Human Trafficking public awareness campaign and provides good resources on how to identify and assist victims.

Church Efforts

The Catholic Church has assumed a pastoral responsibility to promote the human dignity of persons exploited through trafficking and slavery and to advocate for their liberation and economic, educational, and formative support. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God. “All human beings,” says the Church, “in as much as they are created in the image of God, have the dignity of a person.

USCCB, through its Migration and Refugee Services and Anti-Trafficking program is at the forefront of the Church's efforts to combat human trafficking. Its largest anti-human trafficking initiatives include *Dignity of Work*, a two-year pilot program providing employment and post-employment services to survivors; *Amistad*, a program focused on awareness-raising in immigrant communities; and *Become a Shepherd*, a parish-based education and training program. The USCCB also coordinates the *Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking*, consisting of national and international Catholic agencies working to eliminate the plight of trafficked victims.

The Oblate JPIC Office engages with corporations through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) to create awareness of the problem and press for policies to prevent it. OMI JPIC is also committed to educating our network and the general public on this issue. Each year leading up to February 8, the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, we join other groups to promote and observe the National Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking. We also provide resources and action alerts on human trafficking during Lent and at various other times throughout the year.

Prayer

Oh God, Great Healing One, please comfort each of Your children who are hurting because of the powerful greed of those who hold them in bondage and help them become free of these hideous bonds. Please heal all the wounds and scars they bear from their horrendous treatment and lead them to healing people and places.

In addition, Dear God, move among those who hold others in bondage or in any way profit from it to change their hearts and minds so they do this no longer. Also, please enlighten those who are unwitting participants in this use of people. St. Eugene, you loved and served the poorest of the poor, please pray for all those held captive by others and for those who hold them captive. AMEN.

Resources

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP) provides extensive advocacy and education materials on sex and labor trafficking:

<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/index.cfm>

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) shares stories from their work overseas serving victims of slavery and human trafficking:

<http://www.crs.org/get-involved/learn/slavery-and-human-trafficking>

Connect through the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking's website:

<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/coalition-of-catholic-organizations-against-human-trafficking.cfm>

Visit the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking website to learn more about the issue:

<http://www.sistersagainstrafficking.org/>

For a very comprehensive list of Human Trafficking signs, visit: www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-the-signs

Report suspicious activity to the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at 1-888-3737-888 or to your local law enforcement.