

*St. Josephine Bakhita*



Human  
Trafficking  
Awareness  
Day

1.11.12

Facts about human trafficking can be found at  
<http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-human-trafficking>.

*Prayer service developed by the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center,  
Seattle, Washington*



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The Coalition for Corporate Responsibility for Indiana and Michigan is a faith-based investor group comprising 11 orders of Catholic women religious.

Congregation of Saint Joseph  
Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters  
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters  
Huntington, Indiana  
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
Donaldson, Indiana  
Servants of Jesus  
Sisters of Mary Reparatrix  
Sisters of Mercy  
West Midwest Community  
Sisters of Providence  
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana  
Sisters of Saint Francis  
Oldenburg, Indiana  
Sisters of the Holy Cross  
Notre Dame, Indiana  
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Monroe, Michigan

**Opening Song** Choose an appropriate song.

**Leader** Let us begin by observing a moment of silence in solidarity with the more than 27 million women, men and children throughout the world who suffer each day in modern-day slavery.

*Moment of silence*

We hold in our hearts all those whose lives are impacted by human trafficking as we pray Psalm 126 together.

**Side 1** When God brought the exiles back to Zion,  
we thought we were dreaming.  
Our mouths were filled with laughter then,  
our tongues with shouts of joy.

**Side 2** And from the nations we heard,  
“Their God has done great things for them.”  
Yes, our God has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy.

**Side 1** Bring back our exiles, O God,  
like fresh streams in the desert.  
May those who sow in tears  
reap with songs and shouts of joy.

**Side 2** Those that go forth weeping,  
bearing the seeds for sowing,  
shall come back with shouts of joy,  
as they carry their harvest home.



It is estimated  
that there are  
approximately  
27 million  
slaves around  
the world.

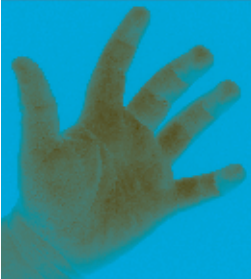
**All** Glory to you, God of life and freedom, praise and thanksgiving now and forever. Amen.

**Leader** Each person forced into slavery has a unique story — a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Let us listen together to the story of one 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 kidnapers.

**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 baptized 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



Around half  
of trafficking  
victims in the  
world are  
under the  
age of 18.

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.

#### Reader 4

St. Josephine was canonized in 2000, and there is currently a grassroots movement to designate her as the patron saint for human trafficking victims.

“In Saint Josephine Bakhita we find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation. The history of her life inspires not passive acceptance but the firm resolve to work effectively to free girls and women from oppression and violence, and to return to them their dignity in the full exercise of their rights.”

—Pope John Paul II, homily at her canonization, 2000

*Moment of silent reflection*

#### Intercessions

In the weeks before her death, St. Josephine Bakhita relived the terrible days of her captivity. It is said that she often cried out: “Please, loosen the chains ... they are heavy.” We ask her to intercede for us as we pray:

For the estimated 27 million people being held in slavery-like conditions...



More than  
two-thirds of  
sex trafficked  
children suffer  
additional  
abuse at the  
hands of their  
traffickers.



The average  
cost of a  
slave around  
the world  
is \$90.

## Response

*Loosen the chains ... they are heavy.*

For young girls and women exploited and objectified in the commercial sex industry... *(Response)*

For those forced to become soldiers, especially children who are de-humanized and are taught to be violent... *(Response)*

For those in bonded labor in agricultural fields, mines and factories... *(Response)*

For conversion of heart for the perpetrators of human trafficking... *(Response)*

For governments, corporations and consumers, that we will address the systems that make human trafficking possible... *(Response)*

For the success of all efforts to stop the demand for human trafficking... *(Response)*

Add your own intentions... *(Response)*

## Closing Prayer

God of hope and freedom, inspire us in our work to loosen the chains of human trafficking in our world. Strengthen us, so that like St. Josephine Bakhita, we may stand firm in our resolve to create a slave-free world. Amen.

## Closing Song

*Choose an appropriate song.*



