

PASTORAL ORIENTATIONS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*“Isn't this surely the fast worth choosing:
releasing those unjustly bound,
undoing their heavy burdens?
letting the oppressed go free,
breaking every yoke?”*

- Isaiah 58

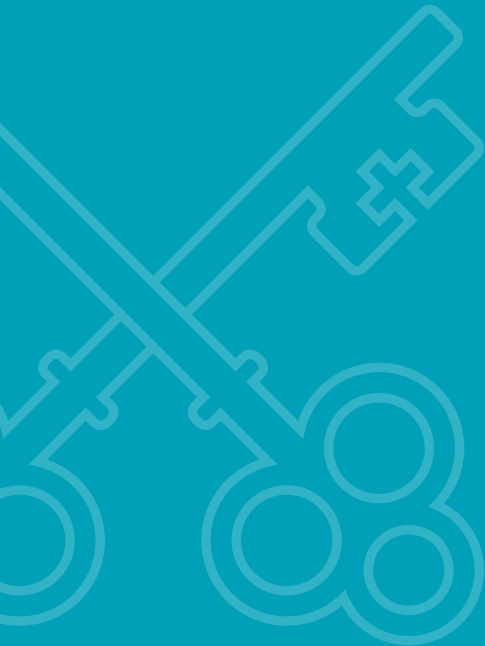


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PREFACE

Pope Francis attaches enormous importance to the plight of the millions of men, women and children who are trafficked and enslaved. They are among the most dehumanized and discarded of people in the modern world and all over the world. Human trafficking, he says, is an "atrocious scourge,"¹ an "aberrant plague"² and an "open wound on the body of contemporary society."³

At the beginning of 2015, Pope Francis dedicated his annual Message for the World Day of Peace to Human Trafficking. "We are facing a global phenomenon that exceeds the competence of any one community or country," and therefore, "we need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself."⁴

In September 2015, the Holy Father told the United Nations that evils like "human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution" cannot be met by "solemn commitments" alone. "We need to ensure that our institutions" - and indeed all our efforts - "are truly effective in the struggle against all these scourges."⁵

It is the purpose of the *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking* to provide a *reading* of Human Trafficking and an *understanding* that motivate and sustain the much-needed long-term *struggle*.

The Migrants & Refugees Section (M&R) began functioning on 1 January 2017. It was established by Pope Francis and is under his direct guidance for the time being. Tasked with addressing Human Trafficking as well as

¹ Pope Francis, *Greeting to the OSCE Conference*, 3 April 2017

² Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 30 July 2017

³ Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014

⁴ Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2015.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Address to the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York*, 25 September 2015.

PREFACE

migrant and refugee matters, its mission is to assist the Bishops of the Catholic Church and all those serving these vulnerable groups.

To address the trafficking and enslavement of human beings, during 2018 M&R held two consultations with Church leaders, scholars and experienced practitioners and partner organizations working in the field. Participants exchanged experiences and viewpoints, addressing relevant aspects of the phenomenon. The Church's full response was considered, in terms of strengths, weaknesses, pastoral and political opportunities as well as enhanced coordination worldwide.

This six-months process resulted in the present *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*, approved by the Holy Father and meant to orient the work of the M&R Section and its partners. The *Orientations* are for use by Catholic dioceses, parishes and religious congregations, schools and universities, by Catholic and other organizations of civil society and by any groups willing to respond. Besides their implementation in local programs as well as collaboration at a distance, the *Orientations* also offer key points for homilies, education and media.

These *Pastoral Orientations* are available at <https://migrants-refugees.va/trafficking-slavery/> in various languages and formats.

The M&R Section invites everyone to engage vigorously in learning, communication and action about preventing and healing Human Trafficking, nourished by reflection, prayer, and the teachings of Pope Francis.

Fabio Baggio C.S. and Michael Czerny S.J.

Under Secretaries

INTRODUCTION

1 At a papal audience in early 2018,¹ a young woman survivor of human trafficking (HT) said: "I think about my country, of many young people who are misled with false promises, swindled, enslaved, prostituted. How can we help them to avoid falling into the trap of illusions and into the hands of traffickers?"

2 Pope Francis took her question deeply to heart. "As you said, it must be ensured that young people not fall 'into the hands of traffickers'. And how horrible it is to realize that many young victims were first abandoned by their families, considered as rejects by their society! Many were then introduced to trafficking by their own families and so-called friends. It happened in the Bible too: remember that the older brothers sold the young Joseph as a slave, and thus he was enslaved in Egypt!" (see Gn 37:12-36). This question and answer sums up the motivation and spirit behind these *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*.

3 "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ."² This heartfelt denunciation by Pope Francis in April 2014 comes as a dire warning about one of the darkest aspects of contemporary history, a phenomenon which, shamefully and tragically, continues even now. HT victimizes millions of people all over the world and today constitutes a widespread, insidious reality in several business sectors, particularly domestic work, manufacturing, hospitality and agriculture. HT takes place in many different ways and situations: sexual exploitation, forced marriage, slave labour, servitude, forced begging, organ-harvesting, reproductive exploitation and other forms of abuse and exploitation. It is embedded in private, commercial, and even public and governmental enterprises. HT is a reality "which affects the most vulnerable in society: women of all ages, children, the handicapped, the poorest, and those

¹ Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018.

² Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014.

INTRODUCTION

who come from broken families and from difficult situations in society."³ HT is a terrible abuse of the dignity and human rights of men and women, girls and boys.

4 The variety of its forms, the heterogeneity of its victims and its many types of perpetrators make HT a very complex problem. Those wishing to plan effective services are immediately confronted with significant challenges. Such complexity requires a multidisciplinary approach in order to understand the phenomenon and its causes, to identify the processes and persons involved in it - victims, perpetrators, and consumers (knowing or unwitting) - before appropriate responses can be shaped.

5 From a Christian anthropological viewpoint, indeed, the sanctity of human life, from conception until natural death, and the inalienable dignity of each and every human being, constitute the starting point and the central focus of every initiative. "The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (see Gen 1:26). This shows us the immense dignity of each person, 'who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons.'"⁴ As Saint John Paul stated in 1988, "When the individual is not recognized and loved in the person's dignity as the living image of God (cf. Gen 1:26), the human being is exposed to more humiliating and degrading forms of 'manipulation', that most assuredly reduce the individual to a slavery to those who are stronger."⁵

6 The *Pastoral Orientations* are deeply grounded in the Church's reflection and teaching and in its longstanding practical experience responding to the needs of men, women, boys and girls caught up in human trafficking and in slavery, both past and present. At Vatican II the Catholic Church reaffirmed its historic concern about forced labour, stating that "slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions where men are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons [...] are infamies" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27). Now "the Catholic Church intends to intervene in every phase of the trafficking of human beings" says Pope Francis; "she

³ Pope Francis, *Address to the New Ambassadors Accredited to the Holy See on the occasion of the Presentation of the Letters of Credence*, 12 December 2013.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, 65; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 357.

⁵ John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, 5.

wants to protect them from deception and solicitation; she wants to find them and free them when they are transported and reduced to slavery; she wants to assist them once they are freed."⁶

7 Pope Francis's insistent teaching on HT provides the foundation for the present *Pastoral Orientations* which draw also from the longstanding practical experience of many international Catholic NGOs working in the field and from the observations of representatives of Bishops' Conferences. While approved by the Holy Father, the *Orientations* do not pretend to exhaust the Church's teaching on human trafficking; rather, they provide a series of key considerations that may be useful to Catholics and others in their pastoral ministry, in planning and practical engagement, in advocacy and dialogue.

8 After considering the legal definition of human trafficking that has been endorsed in international law, each of the ten sections of the *Orientations* analyzes the cruel facts and challenges of one facet of the phenomenon. It then suggests a range of responses, some of which favour, in particular, the culture of encounter that Pope Francis promotes as a necessary step towards new life in every area of human injustice and suffering.

DEFINITION

9 *The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*⁷ (*Palermo Protocol*) provides the current internationally-agreed legal definition of HT. Article 3, paragraph (a) defines Trafficking in Persons as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons,

⁶ *Address to Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018.

⁷ As of 12 December 2018, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* (available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>) has been ratified by 173 Member States. The Holy See has not yet adhered to this instrument.

DEFINITION

by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”⁸

10 The *Palermo Protocol* defines trafficking in children (under the age of 18 years) somewhat differently. In such cases, it is not necessary to show that force, deception or any other form of coercion or abuse of power or vulnerability was used. All that is required is to show that an action of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the specific purpose of exploitation has taken place.⁹

11 The elements of these internationally agreed definitions provide the parameters within which the crime of HT can be prosecuted. It is worth noting, however, that since the *Palermo Protocol* supplements the *Convention against Transnational Organised Crime*, it is applicable only to offences that are transnational in nature and involve organized criminal groups. Still, the definition provides a useful minimum or starting-point for further reflection and action against this scourge.

12 In recent times the expression *modern slavery* has often been used as a synonym for HT. Although persons who are trafficked frequently become enslaved, HT is more subtle and exists on a broader spectrum than the stark example of slavery (see §9, above). Furthermore, adding the adjective *modern* to *slavery* can be misleading as it might suggest that this phenomenon is nowadays different from what occurred in the past. Slavery is dehumanizing and revolting in whatever era, in whatever form, even if over the ages it seemed to be accepted as a fact of life.

13 Since purely domestic crimes fall exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of each State, the *Palermo Convention* focuses on those instances of human trafficking involving movements across national borders and on actions by organized criminal groups. But activities of just as despicable a nature and with the same horrific consequences for victims can occur within a single country and can

⁸ See Article 3 (a).

⁹ See Article 3 (c).

be perpetrated by individuals (such as a relative, an acquaintance, a so-called friend) who are not involved in organized crime. For the most part, these *Pastoral Orientations* accept the definitions set forth in the *Palermo Protocol* while introducing the basic conviction that HT is both criminal and seriously sinful because it constitutes coercion or abuse leading to exploitation that harms the dignity of the person.

14 HT and migrant smuggling are distinct phenomena. Migrant smuggling is the “procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.”¹⁰

15 When taking stock of the *Palermo Protocol* definition, many organizations working against HT add or underline key elements for their communicative or pedagogic value, thus making the meaning, impact and consequences of HT clearer to many people.¹¹ The understanding of HT is in flux.

10 UN, *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, 2000, Art. 3.

11 See, among others, www.caritas.org; www.coatnet.org, www.osce.org/secretariat/trafficking

REALITY AND RESPONSES

16 What follow are ten sets of observations on contemporary HT. They analyze the cruel facts and challenges of HT and suggest responses for the urgent consideration of all individuals and institutions of good will. The sources are the Catholic Church's current thinking and practice on the elimination of HT, expressed in many statements of Pope Francis on this topic. The sets of observations are grouped under four sub-headings. They begin with establishing why HT takes place and why the depravity of slavery persists in the 21st century. Then, why HT remains so hidden. Third, how HT operates. Finally, what can be done, and how it can be done better.

Among so many open wounds in our world, one of the most troubling is the trade in human beings, a modern form of slavery, which violates the God-given dignity of so many of our brothers and sisters [...].

Pope Francis, *Greeting to the Second European Assembly of RENATE*, 7 November 2016

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE CAUSES

1. COMMODIFICATION AND EXPLOITATION

17 HT takes control over its victims and puts them in locations and situations where they are treated as commodities, to be bought and sold and exploited as workers or even as 'raw materials' in multiple and unimaginable ways.

In many parts of the world, there seems to be no end to grave offences against fundamental human rights, especially the right to life and the right to religious freedom. The tragic phenomenon of human trafficking [...] is but one unsettling example of this.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* 2014, 8 December 2013.

Until recent times, such treatment was associated with colonialism and the slave trade. Despite the formal abolition of the latter, the exploitation of some human beings by others has not ended but now takes place in terrible new forms on a significantly large scale. These are manifestations of immoral social, cultural and economic systems and practices, which promote consumerist attitudes and increase inequalities within and among regions. Coincidentally, our times have witnessed a growth of individualism and egocentricity, attitudes that tend to regard others through a lens of cool utility, valuing them according to criteria of convenience and personal benefit.

Narcissism makes people incapable of looking beyond themselves, beyond their own desires and needs.

Pope Francis, *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2016

The exploitation of others has perversely but quietly been accepted as a means to achieve one's own pleasure and gain, although the language used may reference the laws of the market: relentless competition to reduce – by any means – the costs for any good and service. Human trafficking deprives many people of their identity and dignity, and commodifies them to the advantage of a few.

Each year thousands of innocent men, women and children are victims of exploitative labour and sexual abuse, and of organ trafficking, and it seems that we have become so accustomed to this, as to consider it a normal thing. This is deplorable; it is cruel; it is criminal! I wish to remind everyone of

the duty to combat this abhorrent plague, a form of modern slavery.

Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 30 July 2017

If the human family wishes to stamp out HT, society itself will have to change. In order to bring HT to an end, all people will need to simplify their needs, control their habits, rein in their appetites. "Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few," and this "implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures."¹²

18 The economic, social and cultural phenomena that are shaping modern societies need to be subjected to profound ethical assessment.¹³ It is vital to safeguard the dignity of the human person, in particular by offering everyone real opportunities for integral human development and by implementing economic policies that favour the family. Pope Benedict XVI taught that "the Church's social doctrine can make a specific contribution, since it is based on man's creation 'in the image of God' (Gen 1:27), a datum which gives rise to the inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms. When business ethics prescind from these two pillars, it inevitably risks losing its distinctive nature and it falls prey to forms of exploitation; more specifically, it risks becoming subservient to existing economic and financial systems rather than correcting their dysfunctional aspects."¹⁴ The personal integrity of each and every human person should always be sought and promoted. As clearly stated in Catholic teaching, policies and measures to counter HT must aim at the integral human development of all persons, and should rely on a people-centred and holistic approach. "I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity: Man is the source, the

¹² John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace* 1990, 8 December 1989, 13, and Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, 222.

¹³ In this regard, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences are dedicating a long-standing effort together with State and non-state actors, as well as international and national institutions, in studying the phenomenon and organizing meetings and working groups to counter this heinous crime.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 29 June 2009, 45.

focus and the aim of all economic and social life."¹⁵ No economic and political exercise can obviate the centrality of the human person, whose dignity and fundamental rights must be the ultimate goal of all policies and economies.

Economic freedom must not prevail over the practical freedom of man and over his rights, and the market must not be absolute, but honour the exigencies of justice.

Pope Francis, *Address to the General Confederation of Italian Industry*, 27 February 2016

19 All over the world the Church is committed to denouncing the commodification and exploitation of people, resulting from the 'throw-away culture' which the Holy Father repeatedly condemns and links to the god of money.

This happens when the deity of money is at the centre of an economic system rather than man, the human person. Yes, at the centre of every social or economic system must be the person, image of God, created to 'have dominion over' the universe. The inversion of values happens when the person is displaced and money becomes the deity.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 28 October 2014

Catholic communities should denounce this false deity; even more, they should be the 'yeast' within societies by promoting significant changes at the local level, towards the integral human development of all. Stakeholders can also do this by establishing an economy of communion.

You can share more profits in order to combat idolatry, change the structures in order to prevent the creation

¹⁵ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 29 June 2009, 25.

of victims and discarded people, give more of your leaven so as to leaven the bread of many. May the 'no' to an economy that kills become a 'yes' to an economy that lets live, because it shares, includes the poor, uses profits to create communion.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the Meeting 'Economy of Communion'*, sponsored by the Focolare Movement, 4 February 2017

2. THE DEMAND ASPECT

20 In public discourse, much attention is paid to traffickers who provide the supply side of HT, although few are arrested and far fewer still convicted. Little is said about the consumers: the factor of demand, which traffickers continue to meet. Considering the different areas in which the victims of HT work or operate (agriculture, domestic work, prostitution and so on), the consumers constitute a huge mass who seem largely unaware of the exploitation of persons who are trafficked, yet enjoy the benefits and services they provide. If men, women and children are trafficked, this is ultimately because there is great demand that makes their exploitation profitable.

If there are so many young women victims of trafficking who end up on the streets of our cities, it is because many men here — young, middle-aged, elderly — demand these services and are willing to pay for their pleasure. I wonder then, is the principal cause of trafficking really the traffickers? I believe the principal cause is the unscrupulous selfishness of the many hypocrites in our world. Of course, arresting traffickers is an obligation of justice. But the true solution is the conversion of hearts, cutting off demand in order to dry out the market.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

People who generate the demand share real responsibility for the destructive impact of their behaviour on other human persons, and for the moral values violated in the process.

21 To reduce the demand that drives HT, accountability, prosecution and punishment are needed along the entire chain of exploitation, from the recruiters and traffickers to the consumers.

We cannot become distracted: we are all called to leave behind any form of hypocrisy, facing the reality that we are part of the problem. The problem is not in the opposite lane: it involves us. We are not permitted to look elsewhere and declare our ignorance or our innocence.

Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018

Punishment of entrapped and exploited people does not appear to be an effective solution, since it simply results in blaming and punishing the victims. Instead, the huge market for such services needs to be laid bare. The buying of so-called sexual services, in all forms including pornography, internet based cyber-sex, strip clubs and erotic dancing venues, is a serious offence against human dignity and human integrity, and an affront to human sexuality. States should consider criminalizing those who take advantage of prostitution or of other uses of sexual exploitation provided by those who have been trafficked. Accountability along the chain of exploitation is also needed when HT facilitates forced marriage, servitude, forced begging, organ-harvesting and reproductive exploitation. Awareness campaigns on the responsibilities and liabilities of the demand side of HT should be promoted at both the national and international levels, with the cooperation of all concerned parties.

The world stands in need of concrete signs of solidarity, especially as it is faced with the temptation to indifference.

Pope Francis, *Catechesis for All Workers of Mercy and Volunteers*, 3 September 2016

22 Buying sexual services from a prostitute has nothing to do with love; instead, it is a serious offence against human dignity.

[Prostitution] is torturing a woman. Let's not confuse the terms. This is criminal, sick mentality. And I want to [...] ask forgiveness to you and society for all Catholics who perform this criminal act

Pope Francis, *Pre-Synodal Meeting with Young People*, 19 March 2018¹⁶

As Pope Francis asserted to a young HT survivor from Nigeria, conversion is needed in Christian communities too, which are called to support every effort to eliminate the demand that sustains the whole HT chain. "Could anyone standing face to face with people who actually do suffer violence and sexual exploitation 'explain' that these tragedies, portrayed in virtual form, are considered merely 'entertainment'?" This question posed by Pope Benedict XVI¹⁷ constitutes an appeal to all Catholics to contribute to raising awareness of consumers' moral and indeed civil responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

3. RELUCTANCE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIRE REALITY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

23 Despite public commitments by States and non-state actors, and despite multiple awareness campaigns undertaken, there is still widespread ignorance on the nature and the spread of HT.

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. Then there are those who, even knowing this, do not want to speak because they are at the end of the 'supply chain', as a

¹⁶ This citation is taken from *Domande dei giovani e risposte del Santo Padre*. Unofficial translation.

¹⁷ *Address at the Welcoming Celebration by the Young People in Barangaroo*, 17 July 2008.

3. RELUCTANCE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIRE REALITY OF HT

user of the 'services' that are offered on the street or on the Internet

Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

Persons who are trafficked usually remain invisible, and HT itself is not easily perceived or detected in one's surrounding society. Many people are prone to lament HT elsewhere, without realizing that it is also taking place in their vicinity as well as in cyberspace.

Particular concern must be shown for migrant children and their families, those who are victims of human trafficking rings, and those displaced due to conflicts, natural disasters and persecution. All of them hope that we will have the courage to tear down the wall of 'comfortable and silent complicity' that worsens their helplessness; they are waiting for us to show them concern, compassion and devotion.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Second Holy See-Mexico Conference on International Migration*, 14 June 2018

Sadly, people who are trafficked are often manipulated and trapped in psychological schemes that do not enable them to escape, to ask for help or even to have a clear understanding of having been – or worse, of actually still being – victims of criminal activity.

The risks inherent in some of these virtual spaces must not be underestimated; through the web, many young people are lured and drawn into slavery from which it then becomes beyond their ability to free themselves.

Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

Furthermore, many of those potentially on the front line, such as law enforcement officers, public prosecutors, judicial authorities and social and health professionals, are often not sufficiently trained to identify

and deal with victims of HT with all the competence, discretion and sensitivity they require.

24 When HT occurs across a country's borders, the communities of origin, transit and destination should be properly informed. Relevant information includes HT prevention, identification and prosecution; the risks, modalities and consequences of HT; and applicable international and national laws. Specific programmes of education and self-education, aimed at reinforcing the capacities for prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership, should be offered at the community level

In recent years, the Holy See [...] has increased its appeals to the international community for cooperation and collaboration between different agencies in putting an end to this scourge. Meetings have also been organized to draw attention to the phenomenon of human trafficking [...]. It is my hope that these efforts will continue to expand in years to come.

Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014

Such programmes should also envisage the appropriate involvement of individuals who have been trafficked.

All those who have been victims of trafficking have been immeasurable sources of support for new victims, and extremely important informational resources to save many other young people.

Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

In addition, youth should be educated to embrace a responsible sexual life within the context of faithful and life-long marriage, to show an ethical respect for other persons, to use the internet with prudence and discrimination, and to inform themselves about the origins and production of the goods they purchase.

4. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Initiatives to combat human trafficking, while concretely aimed at dismantling criminal structures, must increasingly consider broader issues associated, for example, with the responsible use of technology and the communications media, to say nothing of exploring the ethical implications of models of economic growth that privilege profit over persons.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Members of the 'Santa Marta Group'*, 9 February 2018

25 Catholics should engage personally, within the family:

The work of raising awareness must begin at home, with ourselves, because only in this way will we be able to then make our communities aware, motivating them to commit themselves so that no human being may ever again be a victim of trafficking.

Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

They should also engage at the community level, in every effort to raise awareness and educate youth so as effectively to prevent and combat HT.

A first task [...] is to put into effect a strategy for ensuring greater awareness of the subject, breaking the veil of indifference that seems to cover the fate of this portion of humanity that suffers, that is suffering.

Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018

4. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

26 The identification and reporting of HT crimes are hindered by several factors. Police investigations are difficult and long. The obstacles to gathering evidence of this criminal activity also include widespread corruption and lack of cooperation by the authorities in third countries.

Another cause of slavery is corruption on the part of people willing to do anything for financial gain. Slave labour and human trafficking often require the complicity of intermediaries, be they law enforcement personnel, state officials, or civil and military institutions.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*
2015, 8 December 2014

Resources are inadequate to address the crime by law enforcement and courts, often coupled with a lack of clear jurisdiction and lines of authority. Besides the traditional approach, law enforcers need to consider other forms, for example, financial investigations. The complex multi-sectoral nature of human trafficking poses significant challenges. There are also cultural constraints that hinder the proper recognition of HT. Survivors frequently do not report the crime due to different compelling motives. Trafficked persons are often legitimately afraid to denounce and testify against the perpetrators. Facing real threats, they fear for their own lives or for the well-being of their families; or lacking the necessary documentation for being in a country or authorization to work, they are afraid that they too will be prosecuted. Moreover, they frequently feel ashamed, utterly alone and unable to trust anyone. Their trauma can make them unwilling or unable to recount their stories, reluctant to relive the atrocious abuses and sufferings. Threats, violence, and despair paralyze them, just as their traffickers had formerly entrapped them.

“There is a sociological fact: organized crime and the illegal trafficking of human beings choose their victims among people who today have little means of subsistence and even less hope for the future. To be clearer: among the poorest, among the most neglected, the most discarded.”

Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018

27 To foster HT detection and reporting, law enforcement officers, public prosecutors, judicial authorities and social and health professionals should be well-trained and properly instructed on HT

4. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

identification and prosecution according to applicable international and national laws. Corruption and connivance by State actors should be vigorously denounced and prosecuted. Competent advocacy by all those concerned, including HT survivors, should be promoted at both the international and national levels. This advocacy should aim at implementing all international agreements, rules and standards that respect migrant rights and promote the integral development of the human person, consistent with the teaching of the Church. Survivors of HT should be encouraged - but not compelled - to participate in the prosecution of their exploiters. Those who choose to cooperate should be supported to do this safely. Any additional fear and stress on their part should be avoided. They should be assured protection, including protection of their privacy, plus safe shelter and both psychological and social assistance. Special protection should be provided to minors who have been victims of trafficking, and any plan for their future should be based on the principle of the best interest of the child taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians or other individuals legally responsible for them.¹⁸

'Protecting' has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 2018*, 24 November 2017

As appropriate, lawyers, civil society groups and faith-based organizations should be allowed to act as proxies of survivors in investigations and trials. The burden of proof should not rest on HT survivors alone. So long as the crime of HT continues to go mostly undetected, traffickers will operate with near impunity.

28 The solid commitment to work against the disgrace that is HT continues to inspire the work of service and advocacy undertaken

¹⁸ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3.

by Catholic-inspired organizations. Churches, Christian communities and other religious organizations which enjoy the trust of those who have been trafficked should be prompted to cooperate in police investigations and legal processes. "The reality is that many trafficking survivors struggle to trust law enforcement, making their liberation and the prosecution of their traffickers much more difficult. Experience has shown that it is much easier for them to grow to trust religious sisters, and other Church personnel, who can build up their trust in the legal process and provide them safe haven and other forms of assistance."¹⁹

THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: AN UGLY, EVIL BUSINESS

5. THE BUSINESS CONNECTION

29 Modern finance, commerce, transportation and communications provide opportunities for the unscrupulous to enter into the system of entrapping and exploiting human persons. In industries such as agriculture, fishing, construction and mining, HT has expanded through collaboration among numerous and various perpetrators, making the phenomenon more complex and complicating the assessment of its origins and impact. The crime is easily hidden within current business models. Outrage, while utterly appropriate, tends to obscure the cold logic of HT as extremely profitable, implanted within even well-regarded businesses. When well-meaning efforts to block HT are undertaken, unscrupulous entrepreneurs simply shift their tactics to avoid the counter-measures.

30 There is an urgent need for ethical assessment of current business models, aimed at revealing the mechanisms of entrapment and exploitation adopted by companies. The Church encourages both sides of the commercial relationship – entrepreneurs who provide and end-users who consume – to engage in this ethical reflection and then to make the changes that are called for.

¹⁹ Paul R. Gallagher, *Intervention on the Protection of and Assistance to Victims*, 28 September 2017.

Economic models, therefore, are also required to observe an ethic of sustainable and integral development, based on values that place the human person and his or her rights at the centre.

Pope Francis, *Message to the Executive Chairman of the 'World Economic Forum' on the occasion of the Annual Gathering*, 23 January 2018

31 The Church is committed to promoting values and business models that truly enable persons and peoples to fulfil God's plan for humankind and to facilitate participation in the economy by all.

The commercial and managerial activities of a company can become places of sanctification, through each person's commitment to building fraternal relationships among businesspeople, executives and employees, fostering co-responsibility and cooperation in common interests.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Christian Union of Business Executives*, 31 October 2015

All Catholics should proactively engage in making societies more just, respectful and inclusive, eliminating all forms of exploitation, especially those that are most ruthless.

While individuals and groups speculate shamefully on slavery, we Christians, all together, are called to develop more and more collaboration, to overcome all kinds of inequality, all kinds of discrimination, which are precisely what makes it possible for a man to make another man a slave. A common commitment to facing this challenge will be a valuable aid for the construction of a renewed society oriented towards freedom, justice and peace.

Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018

6. WORKING CONDITIONS AND SUPPLY CHAINS

32 HT is often hidden within the labyrinth of supply chains. Increasingly competitive markets compel firms to cut labour costs and access raw materials at the lowest possible price.

Many more, every day, carry the weight of an economic system that exploits human beings, imposing on them an unbearable 'yoke', which the few privileged do not want to bear.

Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 6 July 2014

Frequently, workers have no choice but to sign contracts with exploitative conditions. A thorough ethical assessment of the human dimensions of supply, production, distribution and recycling rarely takes place. The attention that now is beginning to be paid to supply chains helps to enhance transparency and accountability, but this should not distract everyone from an honest and thorough assessment of the real responsibilities of consumers and of the countries they live in.

States must ensure that their own legislation truly respects the dignity of the human person in the areas of migration, employment, adoption, the movement of businesses offshore and the sale of items produced by slave labour.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014

33 The demand for cheap goods based on cheap labour needs to be promptly and properly addressed, both by raising public awareness and through legislation. To encourage a fair economic model promoting the integral human development of all, legislation should require all companies, particularly those working transnationally and outsourcing in developing countries, to invest in the transparency and accountability of their supply chains.

Businesses have a duty to ensure dignified working conditions and adequate salaries for their employees, but they must also be vigilant that forms of subjugation or human trafficking do not find their way into the distribution chain.

Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014²⁰

Regulations should be put in place requiring employment contracts that are duly established, free of abusive clauses and duly respected. Campaigns should make the final consumers aware when victims of HT are involved in any process of production.

We must raise awareness of this new evil which, in the world at large, wants to be hidden since it is scandalous and 'politically incorrect'. No one likes to acknowledge that in one's own city, even in one's own neighbourhood, in one's region or nation there are new forms of slavery, while we know that this plagues almost all countries.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 18 April 2015

"It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise."²¹

34 Catholic business leaders should put the Church's teachings into practice by providing decent working conditions and adequate pay to support one's family: "Recognising the subjective dimension of work acknowledges its dignity and importance. It helps us to see that work is for the person and not the other way around. Employees are not mere 'human resources' or 'human capital!'"²² All Church offices, religious congregations and Catholic organisations should also devote the

²⁰ See also: *Laudato Si'*, 123.

²¹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 29 June 2009, 66.

²² Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Vocation of the Business Leader. A Reflection*, Rome 2018, 49

necessary training, resources and expertise in order to properly monitor their procurement policies and employment contracts, to ensure that these are respectful of fundamental human rights and dignity.

Being 'united in defense of hope' requires a greater culture of transparency among public entities, the private sector and civil society. I do not exclude here ecclesiastical organizations. No one can be excluded from this process. Corruption is preventable and calls for commitment on the part of all.

Pope Francis, *Address to Authorities, the Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps*, Government Palaces Honour Yard, Lima, 19 January 2018

7. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

35 In reality, the line between migrant smuggling and HT is growing thinner. A situation of migrant smuggling can easily become HT. In recent years, in massive mixed flows of migrants and refugees, many desperate people, compelled by the lack of accessible and legal alternatives - also due to increasingly restrictive migration policies, have begun as clients of smugglers only to become victims of traffickers. When governmental and non-governmental humanitarian programmes fall short of dealing with the numbers of people seeking protection or resettlement, and as international humanitarian and development assistance is being reduced, migrant smugglers and then traffickers prove expert in capitalizing on these inadequacies.

Traffickers are often people without scruples, without morals or ethics, who live on other people's misfortunes, exploiting human emotions and people's desperation in order to subjugate them to their will, rendering them slaves and subservient. Suffice it to think how many very young African women arrive on our shores hoping to start a better life, thinking they will earn an honest living, and instead are enslaved, forced into prostitution.

Pope Francis, *Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking*, 12 February 2018

36 To prevent people from resorting to the services of smugglers and falling into the hands of traffickers, one should first of all ensure that they do not feel forced to leave their homelands. The most radical form of prevention is, thus, upholding *the right to remain* in one's country and place of origin and ensuring that people have access there to basic goods and integral human development. People's basic needs are even more acute in situations of armed conflict or violence which often force them to flee without a minimum of preparation or protection. When for whatever reasons they have decided to leave, or are forced to do so, smuggling and trafficking can be prevented if more accessible legal pathways for safe and orderly migration are provided.

Welcoming means, above all, offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally. This calls for a concrete commitment to increase and simplify the process for granting humanitarian visas and for reunifying families.

Pope Francis, *Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*
2018, 15 august 2017

Reliable information about migration and asylum needs to be communicated and disseminated.

The ethical quality of communication is the result of conscientious — not superficial — attention, always respectful of people, both those who are the subject of information and the recipients of the message. Each, in his own role and with his own responsibility, is called to be vigilant in maintaining a high level of ethics in communication.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Executive Directors and Employees of the Italian Radio-Television Network (Rai)*, 18 January 2014

Protection begins in the country of origin, and consists in offering reliable and verified information before departure, and in providing safety from illegal recruitment practices.

Pope Francis, *Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* 2018, 15 august 2017

There needs to be special and intense prosecution of organized crime engaged in people smuggling and trafficking nationally and transnationally, along with prosecution of connivance by local and national authorities.

Corruption is a fraud against democracy and it opens the doors to other terrible evils such as drugs, prostitution and human trafficking, slavery, organ trafficking, arms trafficking, and so on.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference of the Christian Union of the Business Executives (UNIAPAC)*, 17 November 2016

37 The Catholic Church is committed to protecting the victims of HT.

Protecting these brothers and sisters is a moral imperative which translates into [...] implementing timely and humane programmes in the fight against 'the trafficking of human flesh' which profits off others' misfortune.

Pope Francis, *Address to the International Forum on 'Migration and Peace'*, 21 February 2017

This begins with reminding parents and family members about their role as first protectors against traffickers. Everyone should be encouraged to unmask and denounce illegal recruitment practices, engage in various initiatives within their reach and work towards a spirit of fairness and for the enhancement of legal pathways for migrants and asylum seekers.

RESPONDING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING: ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

8. BOLSTERING COOPERATION

38 The implementation of the *Palermo Protocol* has been commonly presented in the form of three Ps: prevention, protection and prosecution. Several national and international institutions have developed their policies and programmes along these lines. Moreover, there is a fourth 'P', namely partnership, which is no less important, but may well remain weak. Lack of cooperation - or even competition - among various State actors often renders well-intentioned policies and programmes ineffective.

In some cases, the lack of cooperation between States means many people are left outside the law and without the chance to assert their rights, forcing them into a position between being taken advantage of by others or resignation to becoming victims of abuse.

Pope Francis, *Message to President of Panama on the Occasion of the Seventh Summit of the Americas*, 10 April 2015

This is true at the international, national and local levels. Similar difficulties diminish the effectiveness of the actions undertaken by civil society organizations.

Intergovernmental organizations, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, are called to coordinate initiatives for combating the transnational networks of organized crime which oversee the trafficking of persons and the illegal trafficking of migrants. Cooperation is clearly needed at a number of levels, involving national and international institutions, agencies of civil society and the world of finance.

Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014

The engagement of the business sector and media in coordinated actions together with other relevant actors is still very weak.

39 Cooperation and coordination among national and international institutions are crucial and fundamental to eradicate HT and to make everyone's actions more expeditious and effective, whether in places of origin, transit or destination.

Much more needs to be done on the level of raising public consciousness and effecting a better coordination of efforts by governments, the judiciary, law enforcement officials and social workers.

Pope Francis, *Greeting of to the Second European Assembly of RENATE*, 7 November 2016

States should share relevant information on HT with other States and develop joint responses in terms of prevention, protection and prosecution. Greater cooperation is needed, as well as the provision of technical and other assistance to countries all along the HT routes. In order to be effective, cooperation and coordination must also involve civil society, faith-based organizations and religious leaders as well as the business sector and media.

Cooperation between the Bishops and civil authorities, each according to their own mission and proper nature, to the end of discovering the best practices to accomplish this delicate task, is a decisive step in assuring themselves that the will of the governments reaches the victims in a direct, immediate, constant, effective and tangible way.

Pope Francis, *Greeting of to the Second European Assembly of RENATE*, 7 November 2016

40 While the Catholic Church has already taken some important steps towards effective coordination among its own institutions, there is room for improvement. Within the Church, greater cooperation among Bishops Conferences, individual dioceses, religious congregations and

Catholic organizations would make existing programmes targeting HT more effective and give rise to new ones. Also helpful would be to work with other Christian churches and communities and collaborate with the followers of other religions.

Dialogue based on confident respect can bring seeds of good that in their turn may bud into friendship and cooperation in many fields, especially in service to the poor, to the least, to the elderly, through welcoming migrants, and attention to those who are excluded. We can walk together taking care of one another and of creation.

Pope Francis, *Interreligious General Audience on the Occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Promulgation of the Conciliar Declaration 'Nostra Aetate'*, 28 October 2015

Moreover, cooperation among the Churches in the places of origin and of return of HT survivors could improve reintegration programmes.

9. PROVIDING SUPPORT TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

41 The reintegration of HT survivors in society is no simple matter, given the traumas they have suffered.

The task of "humanitarian and social workers [...] is to provide victims with welcome, human warmth and the possibility of building a new life.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014

Their many needs begin with the physical, psychological and spiritual; they need to heal from trauma, stigma and social isolation.

They are human people, I stress this, who are appealing for solidarity and assistance, who need

urgent action but also and above all understanding and kindness.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, 24 May 2013

Health providers often need to be specifically trained in order to identify the symptoms and to treat the unique, albeit multi-dimensional consequences of HT. The practical challenges are many. Victims require help to pay off debts, secure accommodation, learn new skills, and find and keep decent employment. Yet HT survivors tend to be overlooked, rejected, punished, or even scapegoated, as if the degrading things they were forced to do were in fact their own fault.

42 States should establish or improve programmes and mechanisms for protecting, rehabilitating and reintegrating victims, allocating to them the economic resources seized from the traffickers.

Victims are the first in need of rehabilitation and reintegration in society"; "All of society is called to grow in this awareness, especially with regard to national and international legislation, in order to be able to ensure that traffickers be brought to justice and their unjust earnings redirected for the rehabilitation of victims.

Pope Francis, *Statement to the "Judges' Summit on Human Trafficking and Organized Crime"*, 3 June 2016, and *Address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 18 April 2015

Appropriate shelter and decent work are important priorities, as well as access to the services of social workers, psychologists, therapists, lawyers, medical practitioners, hospital emergency department personnel and other professionals. All of these require training to recognise and respond to the complex needs of persons who have been trafficked. When survivors prefer to stay in the country of destination, they will need access to quality education and programmes aiming at their social and occupational integration.

The basic response lies in creating opportunities for integral human development, starting with a quality education: this is the key point, quality education from early childhood, to continue generating new opportunities for growth through employment. Education and employment.

Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018

Pathways for reuniting with family must be available.

The family dimension of the process of integration must not be overlooked.

Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Forum on 'Migration and Peace'*, 21 February 2017

Special attention is needed for survivors with long-term emotional or mental health disorders or substance abuse. Above all, no matter what the practical measures taken, these survivors are human beings and should always feel that they are being treated with the greatest respect.

43 Local Churches, religious congregations and Catholic-inspired organizations which have pioneered support programmes for HT survivors, are urged by Pope Francis to enhance and professionalise their efforts and coordinate them better, while reminding others of their responsibilities.

Yet I would like to mention the enormous and often silent efforts which have been made for many years by religious congregations, especially women's congregations, to provide support to victims.

Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014

The Church is committed to raise awareness of the growing need to support victims of these crimes by accompanying them on a path of reintegration into

society and the recovery of their human dignity. The Church is grateful for every effort made to bring the balm of God's mercy to the suffering, for this also represents an essential step in the healing and renewal of society as a whole.

Pope Francis, *Address to the 'Santa Marta Group'*, 9 February 2018

Pastoral workers serving HT survivors should always recall the importance of addressing their spiritual needs, recognizing the healing power of faith, which is especially offered to Catholics in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Church [...] is charged with showing to all the path to conversion, which enables us to change the way we see our neighbours, to recognize in every other person a brother or sister in our human family, and to acknowledge his or her intrinsic dignity in truth and freedom.

Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2015*, 8 December 2014

Through witnessing to the merciful love of God, the faithful might also contribute to the conversion and rehabilitation of perpetrators of HT.

We Christians believe and know that Christ's resurrection is the true hope of the world, the hope that does not disappoint. It is the power of the grain of wheat, the power of that love which humbles itself and gives itself to the very end, and thus truly renews the world. This power continues to bear fruit today in the furrows of our history, marked by so many acts of injustice and violence. It bears fruits of hope and dignity where there are deprivation and exclusion, hunger and unemployment, where there are migrants and refugees (so often rejected by today's culture of waste), and victims of the drug trade, human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery.

Pope Francis, *Urbi et Orbi Message, Easter*, 1 April 2018

10. PROMOTING REINTEGRATION

44 After trafficked persons have been released and repatriated to their place of origin, reintegration needs to follow, but such national and international programmes are quite rare. The few that do exist often entail a speedy and compulsory return, with little consideration of the obstacles and even dangers of repatriation. A country of destination should honour its responsibility to provide survivors of HT with a residence permit, specialized psychological assistance and alternative livelihoods before their eventual repatriation.

45 The return of HT survivors – whether repatriated from foreign soil or relocated within their home country – should never be compulsory. Conversely, full support should be offered to HT survivors who opt to go back home. “In the less developed countries from which most of the victims come, there is a need to develop more effective mechanisms for the prevention of trafficking in persons and the reintegration of its victims.”²³ They should be assured a safe return, proper assistance in their place of origin and effective protection against being trafficked again or subjected to retaliation or harassment by the traffickers. Supportive services should be available to survivors and their families. Job-training and ready access to employment are very important.

For those who decide to return to their homeland, I want to emphasise the need to develop social and professional reintegration programmes.

Pope Francis, *Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*
2018, 14 January 2018

Without full reintegration, the terrible trajectory of HT will not be dismantled, nor will stigma and suffering be left behind, nor the HT survivor made whole or offered a chance to live a life worthy of his or her human rights and dignity.

23 John Paul II, *Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the Occasion of the International Conference "Twenty-first Century Slavery – The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings"*, 15 May 2002.

46 Reintegration programmes addressing HT survivors should always include the spiritual dimension as an essential element of the integral human development, which is their ultimate goal. This spiritual dimension should be fully integrated in the action of all Catholic-inspired and faith-based organizations that generously serve HT survivors.

CONCLUSION

47 “I have always been distressed at the lot of those who are victims of various kinds of human trafficking. How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry, ‘Where is your brother?’ (Gen 4:9). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Let us not pretend and look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think. This issue involves everyone!”²⁴

The Holy Father prays that “God may liberate all those who have been threatened, injured or mistreated by trade and trafficking in human beings, and may bring comfort to those who have survived such inhumanity.” He appeals to each and every one of us “to open our eyes, to see the misery of those who are completely deprived of their dignity and their freedom, and to hear their cry for help.”²⁵

In accordance with Pope Francis’s repeated exhortations and encouragement, may these *Pastoral Orientations* serve as a framework for planning, establishing, conducting and evaluating the whole range of actions aimed towards the important and urgent goal of overcoming HT. While the immediate objective is the liberation and rehabilitation of all who are entangled in HT, the ultimate goal is to dismantle and eradicate this most evil and sinful enterprise of deception, entrapment, domination and exploitation. “This immense task, which requires courage, patience and perseverance, demands a joint and global effort on the part of the different actors that make up society. The Churches must also play a role in this.”²⁶

24 Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, 211.

25 Pope Francis, *Message to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales for the Day of Life*, 17 June 2018. Unofficial translation.

26 Pope Francis, *Video Message to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery*, 7 May 2018.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the inspiring example of Saint Josephine Bakhita.

Saint Josephine Bakhita, you were enslaved as a child; you were bought and sold, you were treated brutally.

Intercede, we implore you, for all those who are trapped in trafficking and slavery. May their captors let them go, and may this evil be erased from the face of the earth.

Saint Josephine Bakhita, once you regained your freedom, you did not let your sufferings define your life.

You chose a path of kindness and generosity.

Help those blinded by greed and lust

who trample the human rights and dignity of their brothers and sisters.

Help them to break out of their hateful chains,

to become fully human again, and to imitate your kindness and generosity.

Dear Saint Josephine Bakhita, your freedom drew you to Christ and his Church.

Then God called you to religious life as a Canossian Sister.

You practiced great charity, mercy and joyful gentleness in your vocation.

Help us always to be like you, especially when we feel tempted

to look away and not to help, to reject others or even to abuse them.

Intercede for us so that Christ may fill our hearts with joy as he always filled yours.

O Loving God, pour your merciful light into our troubled world.

Let it flood into the darkest shadows.

Bring salvation to the innocents who suffer under sinful abuse.

Bring conversion to the utterly lost souls who hold them captive and exploit them.

Give us all the strength to grow in the true freedom

of love for you, for each other and for our common home.

Amen.

Further ideas and resources may be found on the M&R website in "Trafficking & Slavery" <https://migrants-refugees.va/trafficking-slavery/> If you have comments or questions about the *Orientations*, or to share an account and photos of an activity in this domain in which you have been involved, please write to info@migrants-refugees.va



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