



X° International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking 2024

"Be confident of this, that the One Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:6)

Inspired by the commitment of young people from all over the world, the theme of the 10th Edition International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking 2024

JOURNEYING IN DIGNITY: LISTEN, DREAM, ACT

The International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking (IDPAAHT) is celebrated annually on the Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita on 8 February, since formally observed in 2015.

The primary objective of this Day is to create a greater awareness of the phenomenon of human trafficking and to reflect on the situation of violence and injustice that affects so many people's lives. Another goal is to attempt to provide solutions to counter human trafficking by taking concrete actions.

The theme of the 10th Edition of the Day continued on from 2023 (**Journeying in Dignity**), chosen by an international group of young people involved in the fight against trafficking. This year, the subtitle **LISTEN, DREAM, ACT** is added to materialize the "Call to Action" commitment made by the international representatives of young people gathered in Rome in February 2023.

The 10th Edition has the following objectives:

- To pray together as brothers and sisters of all ages, cultures, and faiths to end human trafficking and other forms of exploitation;
- Raising awareness about human trafficking at all levels - local churches, traditions, and communities;
- Celebrating the 10th year anniversary of the Day with partners and people of goodwill;
- Closing the year dedicated to young people (2023-2024).

With this:

LET US LISTEN

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jer. 29: 11)

Listen to the Truth Spoken by Pope Francis:

"I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will, and all those near or far, including the highest levels of civil institutions, who witness the scourge of contemporary slavery, not to

become accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity.”ⁱ

Listen to the Suffering:

Global Suffering: Human trafficking permeates every aspect of our society and world. It is woven through our clothes, lights up our electronics, and seasons our food. At its core, human trafficking is a manifestation of extreme inequality. Those with power exploit the vulnerable for profit. These issues affect all people across the globe without distinction of nationality or geographic location. However, these conditions disproportionately affect those experiencing poverty and other vulnerability factors, especially women and girls.

Migratory Suffering: During 2023 our world has seen the immense suffering of peoples due to increasing numbers of more complex conflicts and war, violence, criminality, an erosion of women’s rights, and the economic and social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many are forced to migrate in unplanned ways putting them at higher risk of exploitation because of loss of homes, livelihoods due to wide-spread environmental degradation, or threats from gang violence. During their journey migrants suffer physical or sexual abuse, despair and hopelessness. Too often they reach a destination only to suffer further under oppressive employers or the constant fear of arrest and deportation.

Climate change has exacerbated human trafficking, forcing millions of people to migrate. Increasingly intense weather events are displacing communities and spurring risks of trafficking. Areas of high risk of forced labour include mining, logging, and textile and garment manufacturing; these industries further contribute to climate degradation. Even renewable industries, vital for transitioning to clean energy, are reliant on forced labour.ⁱⁱ

LET US DREAM

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.” (Is. 43:2-3a)

Dream with the Vision of Pope Francis:

We are all pilgrims on this land. We must not be afraid to “dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, [...] brothers and sisters all” (Pope Francis FT, 8).ⁱⁱⁱ

“Every human being — man, woman, boy and girl — is the image of God; God, who is love and freedom, gives himself through interpersonal relations; therefore every human being is a free person, destined to live for the good of others in equality and brotherhood. Every person and all people are equal and their freedom and dignity must be recognized. [...] We declare in the name of all people and of everyone of our own Creed that modern slavery —

in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or the trafficking of organs — is a crime ‘against humanity’.”^{iv}

Dream with Young People

We commit to spread with hope and joy the light of dignity through awareness-raising on human trafficking.

LET US ACT

Act with Courage

“Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or in dread of them,
for the Lord your God is the One who is going with you.
God will not desert you or abandon you.” (Deut. 31:6)

"The globalization of indifference, which today burdens the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters, requires all of us to forge a new worldwide solidarity and fraternity capable of giving them new hope and helping them to advance with courage amid the problems of our time and the new horizons which they disclose and which God places in our hands."^v

There is a need for responsible behaviour, responsible solutions, and responsible leadership and agents to effectively educate the general public, learn from those with lived experience and adopt new solutions to address all forms of human trafficking.

Journeying in Dignity to Call to Action against human trafficking.

.... Together, encouraged by the message of Pope Francis on February 8th 2023 to us, we commit:

- *To care for our own dignity and that of all other human beings, because it is God’s gift;*
- *To spread with hope and joy the light of dignity through spreading information and raising awareness of human trafficking;*
- *To plan actions that aim to change the circumstances which forced millions of people to live in slavery-like conditions, by using our creativity through art, dance, music;*
- *To pray together to end human trafficking.*

We call young people around the world to walk and to journey - together with us - for human dignity, in this special year of involvement of young people towards the 10th anniversary of the IDPAAHT that will be celebrated on February 8th 2024. We call all people of good will, partners organizations and other faith to support our commitment in guarding the light of human dignity and to be a blessing together for every human being.”^{vi}

It is fundamental on this Day to encourage and increase educational and awareness-raising paths, especially for young people, towards a “healthy use of technology” (Pope Francis, Angelus, 09.02.2020).^{vii}

Saint Josephine Bakhita intercede for us, so that we can continue with courage to serve our sisters and brothers as we journey together, in prayer and in action, to overcome human trafficking and all forms of exploitation.

Again, the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking is an invitation to all people of goodwill, young people and children, people of different religious beliefs and traditions, cultures, and generations. Together in this journey, we as pilgrims of human dignity with hope, dream, and action against all forms of exploitation and human trafficking.

Together, we embark on a synodal journey to listen deeply to what is happening around us.

Together, let us dream with hope and joy of the light of dignity and

Together, let us journey for dignity with courage for action against human trafficking!

ⁱ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20141208_messaggio-xlviigiornata-mondiale-pace-2015.html

ⁱⁱ <https://www.walkfree.org/news/2023/new-report-links-compounding-global-crises-to-modern-slavery/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

^{iv} https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141202_dichiarazione-schiavitu.html

^v https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20141208_messaggio-xlviigiornata-mondiale-pace-2015.html

^{vi}

https://preghieracontrotratta.org/files/documenti/EN_CALL_TO_ACTION_FROM_YOUNG_PEOPLE_TO_JOURNEY_IN_DIGNITY_USm5pQ1.pdf

^{vii} https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2020/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20200209.html