The Saint Bakhita Song Competition

Background

The **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking** (IDPAAHT), observed annually on the **Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita** (February 8) is a global movement of prayer, reflection, and commitment to ending human trafficking. The Church is called to journey together as pilgrims of hope and peace, particularly in a world where children and young people continue to face violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, discrimination, neglect, conflict, and other situations that threaten their dignity and wellbeing.

Inspired by the theme for the IDPAAHT 2027, "**Safeguarding Human Dignity: Protecting Children and Young People on a Pilgrimage of Hope and Peace**," this campaign invites young people to become leaders of anti-trafficking efforts and protecting the most vulnerable. Together, we will journey toward **World Youth Day** (WYD) 2027 in South Korea with a global prayer pilgrimage. From Rome to Seoul and through the witness of St. Josephine Bakhita, one of patron saints of WYD 2027, we will unite in prayer and advocate for a world free of human trafficking.

To learn more about the journey from IDPAAHT to WYD, visit the concept note here.

The competition

The **Song Competition** seeks to give children and young people a creative voice in this journey. They are invited to **compose an original song suitable for contemplative prayer** that expresses their faith and carries the message of hope, peace, and human dignity across borders.

Five songs will be launched on February 8, 2027 as the winners of the competition, and will each receive a prize of **$1000 USD**. The winning songs will be shared on **social media** (@preghieracontrotratta on Facebook and Instagram).

Guidelines

Songs should be:

- A prayer inspired by the themes of the IDPAAHT and/or the World Youth Day.
- Short, simple and meditative – suitable for repeated singing:
    - Performed at a tempo between 50 and 80 BPM, with a maximum duration of 30 seconds (for a single iteration of the melody).
    - The melody should be between two and sixteen bars.
    - The lyrics should be up to 4 lines or 30 words.
- Appropriate for simple instrumental accompaniment or a cappella.
- Suitable for children, young people, and adults.

The competition is open to:

- Children and young people up to 35 years old;
- Choirs and musical groups;
- Parish, school, youth, family, and community groups (Religious or laity)

How to participate

Please submit the following files and information via email to feb8@talithakum.info by December 15, 2026:

1. A **video** (**mp4**) of yourself or your group performing the song, without subtitles, video effects, or logos.

2. The **lyrics** of your song, which can be composed in any language.
Please consider providing a translation of your song in one of the official languages of the IDPAAHT (English, Italian, Spanish, French or Portuguese).

3. The **written melody** (chords or instrumental arrangement) of your song.

4. **Information** about the people involved in the production of the song to be credited (their full names and their role) and any relevant background information you would like to share. For example: singers, composers, lyricists, musicians, producers, etc.

5. A **consent form** to authorize the dissemination of your video filled and signed by each person physically appearing in the video (signed by parent/guardian if under 18).

Criteria & Jury

Each submission will be evaluated by a jury, composed of representatives from the UISG, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, the Taizé Brother community (to be confirmed) and the band Gen Verde (to be confirmed). The jury's evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

Criterion Points - TOTAL	**100**
Suitability for meditative prayer	20
Musical creativity and quality	20
Lyrics and theological/spiritual expression	20
Connection with the theme	15
Prayerfulness and spiritual depth	15
Inclusiveness and cultural relevance	5
Safeguarding message and awareness	5

Timeline

1. Submission period: October 2026 – December 15, 2026
2. Selection period: December 15, 2026 – January 30, 2027
3. Announcement of winners: February 7, 2027
4. Launching: February 8,2027
5. International Prayer Relay (February-August 2027)
6. Promoting of winning songs: August 3–8, 2027 (WYD2027)

"Lord, source of all hope,
as we remember Saint Josephine Bakhita,
who, even amid the suffering of slavery,
came to know your love and bore witness to hope,
grant that we may uphold one another's dignity and freedom,
break the chains of hatred and violence,
and bring the light of hope to the world. Amen."

Prayer for St. Josephine Bakhita – World Youth Day 2027