



GIORNATA INTERNAZIONALE DI PREGHIERA
E RIFLESSIONE CONTRO LA TRATTA DI PERSONE

UNA LUCE CONTRO LA TRATTA DI PERSONE

TALITHA KUM

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Press Release

THEY ARE JUST CHILDREN! NOT SLAVES

February 8

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING

The launch of the website for the third World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Trafficking in Persons (GMPT), will take place on 1st of February at 11.00 at the Sala Stampa Estera, via dell'Umiltà N.83, Rome. At this launch, the organisers will present the theme "They just are children! not slaves." as well as testimonies of those who try to bring help to those who have been involved in trafficking.

The event, is celebrated on Feb. 8th, the day when we remember liturgically St Bakhita, who in life endured the sufferings of slavery. It is promoted by **Talitha Kum (UISG-USG)**, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking of people, in **collaboration with the Department for Consecrated Life, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, the Vatican Academy of Sciences, Caritas International (CI), the International Union of Catholic Women's Associations (WUCWO) and the working group against trafficking of the Justice and peace Commission of the International Union of Superiors and of Superiors General (UISG / USG).**

It is estimated that over the past thirty years, approximately 30 million children have been involved in trafficking. Currently in the world, every two minutes, a baby or child is a victim of sexual exploitation. More than 200 million children work, of which 73 million are under 10 years old. 22,000 of these children die each year due to work related accidents. In the new website dedicated to this day www.preghieracontrotratta.org, you can find details of the events that will take place in the week from 2 to 8 February 2017, and some stories, like the following, of these little ones.

COMITATO ORGANIZZATORE: *Unione Internazionale delle Superiore Generali-Unione dei Superiori Generali (UISG/USG) – Congregazione per gli Istituti di Vita Consacrata e le Società di Vita Apostolica (CIVCSVA) – Pontificio Consiglio Giustizia e Pace – Pontificio Consiglio dei Migranti e Popoli Itineranti – Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze – Caritas Internationalis – Unione Mondiale delle Unioni Femminili Cattoliche (WUCWO) – Anti-Trafficking Working Group (UISG/UISG)*

Lalani a 16 year old girl who attended high school in Melbourne, was brought on holiday by her parents to their country of origin. In reality, a forced marriage, not a holiday, awaited her. When the girl rebelled, her parents went back in Australia, taking away her passport and leaving her in despair to endure a fate decided by others. The companions of Lalani at school in Australia, managed to reach her through Facebook and through the "My Blue Sky" site they denounced what was happening and managed to save their friend. The girl was able to obtain new travel documents and a plane ticket to return to Australia where she was met by an NGO. Through a process of mediation she re-established contact with her birth family and was able to achieve her dream of continuing her studies.

Very often mere children are involved in sexual trafficking, as in the case of three cousins ??aged 8 and 9 years from a poor family in Cebu City, Philippines, trafficked for cybersex. *"A guy approached our mothers and asked if we wanted to earn some money"* say the little ones – *"He asked to take us to a place to meet foreign people on the internet. According to him, he would only show our faces on the computer and in return would give 100 pesos. Our mothers, thinking about money they would receive, accepted the offer. The guy convinced us to go with him to help our families. Since we were very poor we believed in his promises "*. But very soon they found themselves involved in a terrifying reality. They were threatened not to tell at home what they were forced to undergo. Thanks to the intervention of the local police, they managed to escape. The girls followed a recovery program, but the psychological damage suffered has marked them forever.

The first day of prayer, Feb. 8th. 2015, strongly supported by **Pope Francis**, was celebrated in more than **154 countries** worldwide. Celebrations in Rome included a prayer vigil, a Mass and participation with banners at the Angelus in St. Peter's Square. During this time the Pope spoke of the event with these words: "I encourage those who are committed to helping men , women and children enslaved, exploited, abused as tools or pleasure and often tortured and mutilated. I hope that those who have responsibilities of government will strive conscientiously to remove the causes of this shameful scourge, a scourge unworthy of a civilized society. Let each of us be committed to being the voice of our brothers and sisters, humiliated by their loss of dignity. Let us all pray together. "

Press office

World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Trafficking in Persons

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