

World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking

Pope Francis designated 8th February, the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, as the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking.

Learn, pray and act to mark this day with your community.

LEARN

Name: St Josephine Bakhita

Feast Day: 8 February

Birthplace: Darfur, Sudan

Born: 1869 (approximately)

Died: 8 February 1947

Canonised: 1 October 2000 by Pope St John Paul II

Patron saint of Sudan, South Sudan and trafficked people



Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan, into a well respected, comfortable and loving family.

However, at about eight years old, Josephine was kidnapped by slave traders, who forced her into slavery. This time was so traumatic that Josephine forgot her own name, so she took one given to her by one of the slave traders, Bakhita, which is Arabic for “lucky”.

Josephine’s final owner was an Italian diplomat, and so began her journey from slavery to freedom. Whilst her owner did business in the Middle East, she stayed in Italy with the Canossian Sisters, working as a nanny.

During this time, Josephine came to know Jesus; she recognised that true freedom and hope come from him, and that he offers fullness of life to all people.

Italy did not recognise slavery and so finally Josephine was free. After being baptised in 1890, she joined the Canossian Sisters in 1893. As an African woman with a deep sense of compassion and experienced slavery and oppression, Josephine was able to help and advise the Sisters who were going to serve in Africa.

Inquiry questions

- What is human trafficking?
- What makes people vulnerable to trafficking?
- What industries are people trafficked into?
- When a person is trafficked or enslaved how is this a violation of human rights?
- In what contexts does child marriage become a violation of human rights?
- How can we help prevent human trafficking?
- What Australian legislation is in place to prevent human trafficking? How could these be strengthened?

PRAY

Prayer

Saint Josephine Bakhita,

You remained strong and brave through years of slavery. You used your knowledge and experience in helping to prepare Sisters who were going to work in Africa. Your gentle manner brought peace and strength to all.

Help us to have courage when times are hard; help us to be strong and supportive to anyone in need; help us always to remain close, as you were, to Jesus, and show his love to all.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: As we honour the memory of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficked people, let us pray that God's freedom and justice will come for all.

1. We pray for the men and women trapped in bonded labour in fields, market gardens, mines and factories, that they will be respected as human beings rather than reduced to commodities and tools of production. God of life, hear us.
Response: God of life hear our prayer.
2. We pray for an end to all discrimination, but especially discrimination against women and girls who are estimated to make up 80% of trafficked victims, so that all may live with dignity and respect. God of life, hear us.
Response: God of life hear our prayer.
3. We pray that wealthy countries such as our own may be generous in supporting impoverished nations so that all people have a decent standard of living and escape the desperate circumstances that make them vulnerable to human trafficking. God of life, hear us.
Response: God of life hear our prayer.
4. We pray that our demand for cheap goods and services will be reduced so that workers' conditions and payment will reflect the dignity of their persons and their work. God of life, hear us
Response: God of life hear our prayer.

ACT



- People are trafficked to work in fields, market gardens, mines and factories to produce products and services at low cost. Purchase goods that are not tainted by slave labour. In the lead up to Easter, chocolate is a good place to start. This Easter when buying gifts for friends and family look for the logos above.
- Make the issue of human trafficking into a topic for your assignment/thesis.
- Organise and support fundraising and awareness events.
- Put a link to ACRATH on your myspace, facebook and other social networking sites:
www.acrath.org.au
- Start a group that focuses on bringing awareness of slavery and trafficking to your peers and local community.
- Learn about the Modern Slavery Act and how supply chains at your school could be strengthened.

Produced in collaboration with [ACRATH](http://www.acrath.org.au) and [Caritas Australia](http://www.caritas.org.au).

Adapted from a resource produced by CAFOD.