



No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters

ROOTS of HUMAN TRAFFICKING: Reflections with Pope Francis

Suggested setting: A table with a bible and a bell. The bell can be rung by the leader (or designated person) after each “response” in the service.

LEADER: As Christians, we are called to prayerful reflection on the events of our lives, as well as the realities in global society, to discern God’s presence and action within us and our world and examine the quality of our response.

SONG: As a Fire is Meant for Burning (Ruth Duck) - YouTube

As a fire is meant for burning
With a bright and warming flame,
So the church is meant for mission,
Giving glory to God’s name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs,
But to build a bridge of care,
We join hands across the nations,
Finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers,
We are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers;
We are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions,
We would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening spirit,
We would live to God’s delight.

As a green bud in the spring time,
Is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness
Mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens
When a storm is passed and gone,
May our lives reflect the radiance
Of God's new and glorious dawn.

READER 1 (Reflection 1):

"Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person which allows him or her to be treated as an object....Whether by coercion or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end."

- Pope Francis, 2015 World Day of Peace Message

"How many times have we permitted a human being to be seen as an object, to be put on show in order to sell a product or to satisfy an immoral desire? The human person ought never to be sold or bought as if he or she were a commodity. Whoever uses human persons in this way and exploits them even if indirectly, becomes an accomplice of injustice,"

- Pope Francis, 2014 Message for the Lenten Fraternity Campaign in Brazil

REFLECT:

Recall a time when you have felt treated as an object or you have observed/learned of someone being "used." What feelings did that experience evoke in you?

READER 2 (Reflection 2):

“Alongside this deeper cause – the rejection of another person’s humanity – there are other causes which help to explain contemporary forms of slavery. Among these, I think in the first place (is) poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a lack of access to education or scarce, even non-existent, employment opportunities. Not infrequently, the victims of human trafficking and slavery are people who look for a way out of a situation of extreme poverty.....

“Another form of slavery is corruption on the part of people willing to do anything for financial gain..... This occurs when money, and not the human person, is at the centre of an economic system.”

- Pope Francis, 2015 World day of Peace Message

“If economic profit takes precedence over the individual and over humanity, we find a throw-away culture at work that considers humanity in itself, human beings, as a consumer good, which can be used and then thrown away.”

- Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements

REFLECT:

How does an understanding of the deep roots of human trafficking shape responses we make?

Have you ever observed a tendency in yourself or others to value money or material things more than the good of a human person? How did that observation affect you?

READER 3 (Reflection 3):

“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.....

“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 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.”

- Pope Francis, 2015 World Day of Peace Message

REFLECT:

In what ways might we inadvertently become accomplices to the evil of human slavery through our daily choices?

As you reflect over the past few weeks, in what ways have you countered the globalization of indifference and concretely expressed your solidarity with the burdens of our brothers and sisters?

DISCUSS INSIGHTS and CALLS TO ACTION

LEADER: Together we pray:

ALL: (Response) We pray that all people enslaved around the world will be set free, physically, and mentally. May all be brought to a place of comfort and refuge.

READER 1: For all children, women and men enslaved around the world today, on farm fields, the street, in mines, factories, restaurants, salons, brick-making kilns, plantations, houses, hotels and more. For all who are trapped by the mental and physical bindings of debt, poverty, fraud and coercion. **(Response)**

READER 2: For all the people who are vulnerable to being trafficked because they are in desperate situations due to poverty, war, natural disasters, homelessness and other situations of risk, may they be kept safe. **(Response)**

READER 3: For the traffickers, so many of whom have been hardened by their own lives, may their hearts be softened and may they change their ways.
(Response)

READER 4: For us, that we may see how we are complicit in the trafficking of human beings. Help us to understand our role, when we demand products made by people who are enslaved and to speak and work for justice for all those who are trafficked. **(Response)**

SONG: We Shall Overcome (Sing one verse – if more verses are desired, make them up from group input go to YouTube)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome someday
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

CLOSING PRAYER: Psalm 72: 1-14 (Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness)

ALL (Response): Bring justice to the peoples, O Beloved, and your mercy to all generations!

LEADER:

May the people be known for mercy, rendering justice to the poor.
Let their spirits soar as the eagle, let joy abide in every heart.
May we hear the cry of the poor – the young and the old,

Helping to free all those in need, awakening the souls of oppressed. (Response)

LEADER:

May we know oneness with you, as long as the sun endures,
As long as the stars shine, throughout all generations.
May we acknowledge you in the rain falling on the fields,
Like showers that water the earth. (Response)

LEADER:

In our day may justice flourish, and peace abound,
Throughout all the nations.
May every heart open to your Love from sea to sea,
From the Rivers of Life out to the universe. (Response)

LEADER:

May the leaders of nations from all the earth, listen to love's voice;
May they send time in silence before they counsel.
May the leaders surrender to your love,
And the nations serve the most high. (Response)

LEADER:

For you heed the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no friend.
You have compassion on the weak, the downtrodden giving them strength.
From injustice and oppression, you redeem their life:
And precious are they in your heart. (Response)

Offer each other a sign of peace!

