

Prayer Service

for an End to Human Trafficking

January 2018

Theme: Human Trafficking: Share the Journey with Migrants and Refugees

Setting: On a ritual table, place a prayer cloth, a candle, and symbols of migrants and refugees to lift up in prayer the men, women and children who voluntarily or are forced to leave their homes.

Opening Song: Select a song, such as *We Shall Overcome, We are Called*.

Leader: In September Pope Francis launched “Share the Journey,” calling us to stand in solidarity with migrants and refugees. The week of January 7-13, National Migration Week, is an opportunity for us to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including immigrants, refugees, and people caught in human trafficking. This observance coincides with National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11 when we remember our sisters and brothers who are victims or survivors of human trafficking. Although it is very difficult to get an accurate number, the U.S. State Department estimates that 17,000 to 19,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. Let us listen to some of their stories.

Reader 1: When Pablo decided to quit his job as a cashier at a San Salvador convenience store and take his chances migrating to the United States, he knew it would be hard. He knew he would spend days walking through the desert. When the 20-year-old said goodbye to his family—with just \$80 in his pocket—he never imagined the nightmare that awaited him. He was kidnapped in northern Mexico by the Gulf Cartel, a powerful drug and human trafficking network, and held for ransom for 5 weeks. “It was the worst experience of my life, even worse than the gang threats my family

was living with in El Salvador,” he says. After his long, perilous journey he spent three months in detention after being picked up by Immigration Enforcement officials. Pablo’s request for asylum was rejected, and he was deported back to El Salvador. As he still faces danger in his home country and is unable to find a job, Pablo plans to attempt the journey to the U.S. again.

—Catholic Relief Services

[Pause]

Reader 2: Shandra arrived in the U.S. hoping to start a career in the hotel industry and support her family in Indonesia. She was met at the airport by a person who she thought would take her to her job, but instead, she found she had been trafficked into a world of prostitution and sexual slavery, drugs and violence. Eventually, Shandra was able to escape, but she had a difficult time finding someone who would believe her story. A Good Samaritan she met on the streets of New York City took her story to the FBI, resulting in the arrest of her traffickers. After years of rehabilitation and being reunited with her daughter in the U.S., she sits on the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, a survivor-led council which advises on federal anti-trafficking policies.

—The BBC, U.S. State Department

[Pause]



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Reader 3: “We are speaking about millions of migrant workers, male and female—and among these particularly men and women in irregular situations—of those exiled and seeking asylum, and of those who are victims of trafficking. Defending their inalienable rights, ensuring their fundamental freedoms and respecting their dignity are duties from which no one can be exempted. Protecting these brothers and sisters is a moral imperative which translates into...implementing timely and humane programs in the fight against ‘the trafficking of human flesh’ which profits off others’ misfortune.”

—Pope Francis, *International Forum on Migration and Peace Address, 2017*

Leader: Pope Francis calls us to share the journey with migrants, refugees and human trafficking survivors. We ask God to guide us in walking with those who are vulnerable to human trafficking when they are forced to leave their homes.

All: Let us share the journey with them.

Leader: We pray for the the millions of women, men and children around the world who make the difficult decision to leave their homes. May we treat them with compassion and understanding.

All: Let us share the journey with them.

Leader: We remember those migrants and refugees, who through force, fraud or coercion find themselves trapped in a situation of exploitation. May they find healing and rehabilitation.

All: Let us share the journey with them.

Leader: We pray that our global leaders will respond to the call to treat migrants and refugees with dignity, and find ways to mitigate human trafficking by listening to survivors.

All: Let us share the journey with them.

Leader: Call us beyond our comfort to encounter and share the journey with our sisters and brothers searching for a better life.

All: Let us share the journey with them.

Leader: Take a few moments of quiet to consider how you might share the journey with migrants and survivors of human trafficking. [Quiet Reflection]

Leader: I invite those that wish to share to do so now.

[Sharing]

All: God of compassion, as economic instability, violence and natural disasters are forcing people from their homes at a rate higher than ever, more and more people are susceptible to human trafficking. Guide us and our world leaders in welcoming refugees and migrants, that they may have a safe journey. Help us to create lasting peace in our world in which all people are safe to stay in their homes. Amen.



Take Action

- Get involved in the Share the Journey Campaign by visiting www.sharejourney.org
- Learn more about National Migration Week at www.justiceformigrants.org/take-action/national-migration-week
- For human trafficking resources: www.ipjc.org or www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org
- Join or start a monthly human trafficking vigil to raise awareness: www.ipjc.org
- If you suspect human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline: **1.888.373.7888**

