

# 2024

## *World Day of Prayer Toolkit*



“The Catholic Church intends to intervene in every phase of the trafficking of human beings; she wants to protect them from deception and solicitation; she wants to find them and free them when they are transported and reduced to slavery; she wants to assist them once they are freed.”

-Pope Francis in an interview on February 12, 2018, in Clementine Hall



Migration and Refugee Services

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visit our new St. Bakhita page and check back for more resources!



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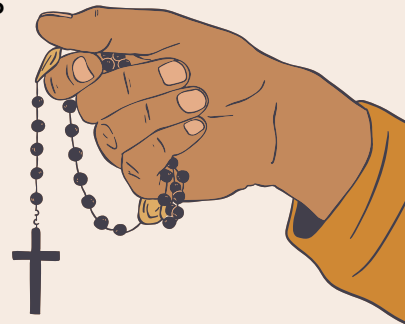


# International Day of Prayer

While the Church recognizes the importance of National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention month as an opportunity to educate and inform the public, it is of primary importance for Catholics as it lays the groundwork for February 8, which is both a Vatican designated day of prayer and reflection against human trafficking and the Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita. January can be understood as a period of preparation for the Church in the United States as we look to this important day of prayer.

With encouragement from Pope Francis, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General designated February 8th as an annual day of prayer and reflection against human trafficking. We pray that we may work together to remove the causes of this disgraceful scourge in all our cities and neighborhoods. We take bold action to help others grow in awareness of the problem of human trafficking taking place in their communities. We seek opportunities to accompany victims and survivors in their journey toward freedom and assist them in the process of renewal.

St. Bakhita was born in the Darfur region of Sudan in 1869 and was kidnapped by slave traders and enslaved as a child. She was forced to walk barefoot over 600 miles and was sold multiple times to different owners before being sold to an Italian diplomat that took her to Italy; here, she valiantly asserted her freedom with the help of the Cannossian Sisters of Venice. Through her faith, St. Bakhita realized the promise of liberty inherent in the human spirit. She lived out the rest of her life as a Cannossian sister, sharing her empowering testimony of human freedom and dignity.





Following her rescue, she was baptized, received other sacraments, and became a religious sister in 1896. Her enslavement during her childhood was put to good use by sharing her testimony with others and advocating for human freedom and dignity. In October of 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Josephine Bakhita, noting that in this saint, “we find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation.” In celebration of her Feast Day, Catholics around the globe are encouraged to attend and/or host prayer services to generate greater awareness of the issues around human trafficking. Praying helps reflect on the experiences of those currently being trafficked while promoting human dignity, strength, comfort and helping empower survivors of this horrible experience.

## Overview of Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some labor or commercial sex act. Inducing a minor into commercial sex is always considered human trafficking, regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion. It is a crime under U.S. federal and international law and is also illegal in all 50 states in the United States.



Due to the clandestine nature of this crime, the estimated number of victims actively trapped in a human trafficking situation worldwide is uncertain, as is the number of people involved in perpetrating this crime. Estimates vary widely, recognizing that perpetrators of this crime often find new tactics, methods, and means to exploit individuals. Human trafficking can take a variety of forms. Some people are trafficked for sexual violence, pornography, and other sexual exploitation.

Some are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture, sweatshops, and domestic servitude. Some are trafficked for both. Through sexual slavery, the body becomes little more than an object to be exploited. For victims of forced labor, the body is made into a disposable machine, made to work long hours for little or no pay and the profit of others. In both cases, the enslaved person is treated as an object for another's benefit. The person's God-given human dignity is either ignored or forgotten.

## **Human Trafficking Statistics**

The data and statistics on human trafficking vastly change, due to the underreported nature of the crime; along with co-occurring reports and individual studies.

- The Global Slavery Index reported in 2022 that there are 49.6 million people in situations of human trafficking, and modern slavery at any given moment in time globally. This equates to 1 in 150 people globally.
- There are 1.1 million victims of trafficking currently residing in the United States. This equates to 3.3 people per 1,000 individuals.
- The National Human Trafficking Hotline reported in 2021, that 81% of victims were adults, 13% were minors, 50% were female, and 48% were male.
- Calculated as a 150-billion-dollar industry, modern-day slavery has become the fastest-growing source of illicit profit for criminals worldwide.
- In 2022, the National Human Trafficking Hotline from Polaris Project's Annual Report showed that most of their calls were 66% sex trafficking, 13% labor trafficking, 6% both labor and sex trafficking, and 15% other/not specified.
- In 2021, 72% of the hotline calls were for sex trafficking and the industries of concern included pornography (11%), illicit massage and spa business (8%), hotels and motels (8%), and residence-based commercial sex (7%).
- In 2021, 10% of calls were for labor exploitation which included, domestic work (17%), agriculture/farms (11%), construction (6%), and retail/small business(6%).

# Common Misconceptions on Human Trafficking

## **a. Victims of human trafficking are predominately undocumented or foreign-born.**

There is the often-held assumption that undocumented and other migrants are at the greatest risk for human trafficking situations. Undocumented individuals are vulnerable and are often manipulated and threatened due to their immigration status. Their legal status often isolates them from legal resources, family members, language barriers, and other issues that help traffickers exploit this population. Nevertheless, many U.S. citizens or legally residing persons are caught in human trafficking and exploited as a consequence. Native-born runaway children, for example, are particularly at risk to individuals who seek to exploit their vulnerability.

## **b. Human trafficking requires someone to be moved or transported across a national border.**

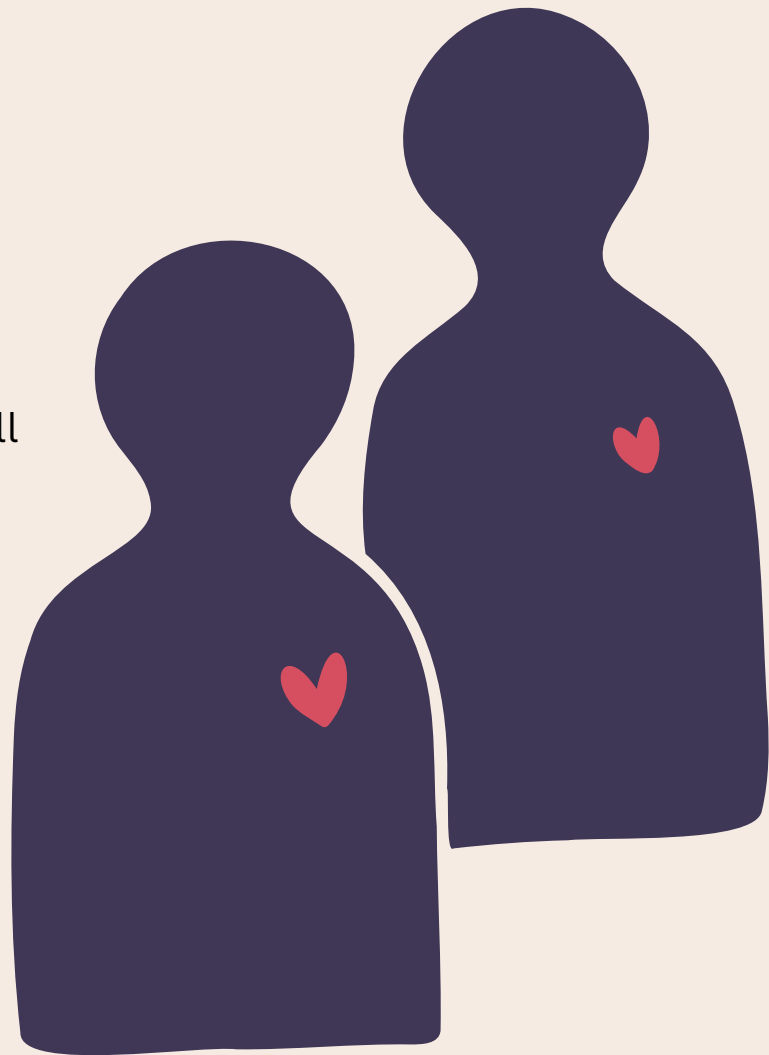
In 2020, a total of 10,583 situations of trafficking were identified, and 16,658 victims of trafficking were identified in the United States. It is unclear how many victims there are worldwide, but one estimates that at least 49.6 million people have been pulled into a human trafficking situation. The overall number could be much more significant. In terms of recruitment, Traditional sites used by traffickers decreased significantly. Recruitment at foster care venues decreased by 70%, at schools declined by 38%, and at strip clubs decreased by 46%.



Traditional locations for trafficking recruitment decreased significantly, including foster care venues, which decreased by 70%, recruitment at schools declined by 38%, and recruitment at strip clubs decreased by 46%. In contrast, there was reported a 22% increase in recruitment on internet sites, which was at the top of recruitment for all forms of trafficking. The Polaris Project reports a 125% increase in recruitment tactics on other sectors like Facebook and a 95% increase on Instagram and other platforms like WhatsApp.

### **c. Strangers exploit most victims of human trafficking.**

There is a misunderstanding that victims do not know their traffickers, and 2020 proved this is false. Usually, there is a common understanding that recruitment efforts (typically low) are from intimate partners, family members, or close friends. In 2020, there was a notable increase in recruitment relationships in all forms of trafficking where victims knew their traffickers. Reports show a 47% increase from 2019-2020, where a family member or caregiver recruited victims. In labor trafficking, 69% of victims were recruited by a current or potential employer and 15% by a family member.





# The Church's Position on Human Trafficking

The elimination of human trafficking is a priority issue for the Catholic Church. Because every life is a gift from God and is sacred, it deserves to be protected and nurtured; we each have a responsibility to fight against the violation and degradation of our brothers and sisters.

The Catechism of the Church forbids acts that cause the enslavement of humans. During the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Church further stated “Slavery, prostitution, the selling of women, and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profits rather than free and responsible persons are infamies and supreme dishonor to the creator.” (Gaudium et Spes, 1965).

In 2014, Pope Francis stated during his Declaration on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: “[M]odern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.”

Men and women's religions have also played an integral part of in the battle against human trafficking. In 2001, nearly 800 women leaders of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) passed a resolution dedicating over one million members “to work in solidarity with one another within our own religious communities and in the countries in which we are located to address insistently at every level the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children . . .”



# Talking Points

- As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human life and vehemently oppose human trafficking and modern-day slavery as it contravenes basic human dignity.
- As Pope Francis has stated: “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”
- There are an estimated 40.3 million victims of human trafficking worldwide. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, including the United States.
- Migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Thousands of individuals are trafficked across U.S. borders and forced into slavery each year.
- Although sex trafficking remains a serious problem, foreign victims are more often found in situations of labor trafficking. In fact, two of the largest trafficking cases in the United States involved labor trafficking in Guam and New York.
- In addition to working to eradicate human trafficking, our nation should ensure that victims have the services and support they need to heal, find affordable housing, earn a living wage, and obtain self-sufficiency.



*Children Working*



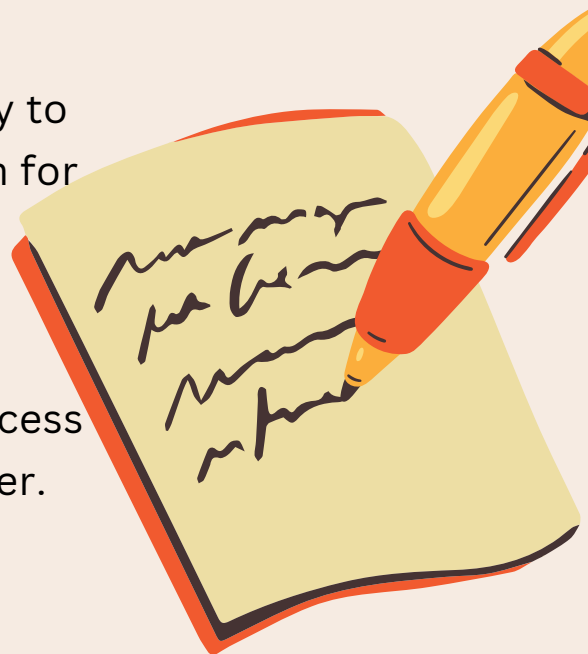
*Seafarers Working on a Ship*

# Letters to Editors Tips

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) is the perfect way to offer your perspective or express your appreciation for an already-published article or commentary piece.

Please let us know if your letter to the editor is published! We will promote it on our social media platforms. Completing this final step in the LTE process helps ensure that your letter's impact is even greater.

Email us at [MRSTraff@usccb.org](mailto:MRSTraff@usccb.org) with a link to your published LTE.



- Keep it short (150-250 words). If you do not edit your LTE, the news outlet might edit it for you. Since they could cut out your main point, it is best to write something both punchy and brief.
- Speak in your own voice. Explain why the article matters to you. Talk about your faith, professional experience, or knowledge of human trafficking. Be personal and authentic.
- Get local. Editors are generally more interested in letters that highlight local impacts. Can you relate the issues raised in a national piece on human trafficking to issues impacting your own community? Follow these best practices:

Reference a recent article (if possible). Your letter is most likely to be published if it responds directly to the newspaper's recent coverage of a specific trafficking issue. Mention the article you are responding to by its headline and date of publication.

Send your LTE in the body of your email, not as an attachment.

Include contact information. Include your full name, contact information, location, and profession or expertise (if relevant) in the email as well. (The paper will not print your contact information.)

Be timely. Try to get your LTE submitted within 1-3 days after the relevant article is published.

# Sample Letters to The Editors

Dear Editor,

Your recent article, [name of article], discussing the issue of [labor/sex trafficking / supply chain transparency] expertly highlighted the existence of trafficking and human exploitation in our [community/country]. I found this piece particularly timely as January is the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Our [country/community] has a proud history of addressing human trafficking, but we can and must do more to ensure that victims are properly identified and assisted. This month serves as an opportunity to not just raise awareness of human trafficking but to commit to redoubling our engagement in meaningful prevention methods. And while we should make this commitment during the month of January, I urge us to remember that prevention and education efforts should be a focus every day of the year.

Sincerely,

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## **OR (when responding to an article with a religious theme or that mentions a bishop or Church leader)**

Dear Editor,

Your recent article, [name of article], discussing the issue of human trafficking and human exploitation was [jarring/uplifting]. As a Catholic, I understand that human trafficking undermines basic human dignity and inflicts harm upon human life. The prevention of human trafficking and misery is a moral issue and one that we must come together to advance. Our Catholic community believes that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God. As the Church prepares to celebrate the Day of Prayer for St. Josephine Bakhita on February 8th, I hope my fellow parishioners will take the opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking. Further, I hope that all Catholics will take the opportunity to educate themselves on this form of human suffering so that we can be better positioned to eradicate this terrible crime.

Sincerely,



# Anti-Trafficking Social Media Template

## Posts for The Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita

(February 8):



### Twitter or Instagram:

*Leading up to the Day of Prayer:*

- A survivor of kidnapping and #slavery, we celebrate a Day of #Prayer for St. Josephine Bakhita, the Patron Saint of Sudan, on Feb. 8th.
- Tomorrow, we will celebrate a Day of #Prayer for Saint Bakhita as we pray for survivors of #humantrafficking and #slavery.

*On the Day of Prayer:*

- Over 70 years ago, St. Bakhita, Patron Saint of Sudan, passed away. Today, we pray for those who have been victims of #slavery & trafficking.
- Today, we celebrate a Day of #Prayer for victims of #humantrafficking & #slavery as we celebrate the incredible Saint Bakhita.



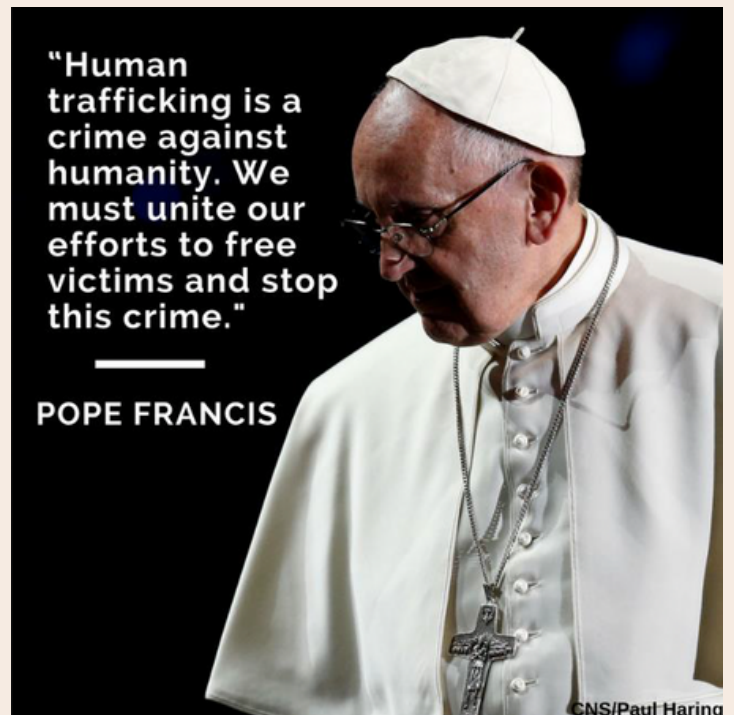
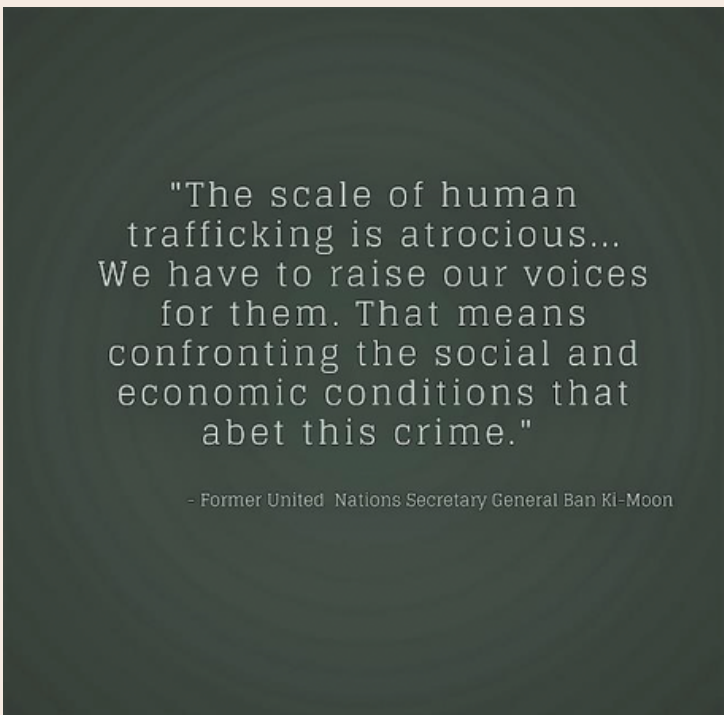
### Facebook:

- St. Bakhita survived slavery and persevered. Once she gained freedom by asserting her human dignity and refusing to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian sister. She dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. In her honor, we recognize today as a Day of #Prayer for victims of #humantrafficking and #slavery.
- Many years ago, Josephine Bakhita lived as a slave. Years later, St. Bakhita was canonized and is now known as the patron Saint of Sudan. Today, in her honor, we pray for all of those who have been victims of slavery and trafficking.

**Graphic to Post (next page)**



“No-one likes to acknowledge that in their own city, region or nation, there are new forms of slavery, yet we know that this wound afflicts almost all countries. We must then denounce this terrible scourge in all its gravity.”-Pope Francis



# Community Engagement Ideas

## Become a Responsible Consumer

### Become a Responsible Consumer

- Find out how many victims of forced labor were involved in producing the products you most commonly buy by visiting the [slavery footprint website](#).
- Download the [Sweat & Toil app](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor. Use when shopping to know which products and countries contribute to child labor.
- Prefer to read about these products on the U.S. Department of Labor website? Check out their [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#).
- Inquire if the hotel where you are staying has signed the [Tourism Child-Protective Code of Conduct](#). This set of principles requires code members to train their employees on how to identify & and report trafficking cases. If your hotel has not signed, encourage them to do so.
- Hold a FairTrade fair or tasting event to educate participants that ethical trade equals just working conditions and wages, an antidote to labor trafficking. Familiarize yourself with the Rederption Market [Ethical Trade Shopping Guide](#).

### Host an Educational Event

Host a movie night. Screen one of the following films to further educate your community on human trafficking. Given the recent popularity of the movie *Sound of Freedom*, can host a viewing party for the film and use our movie guide to help frame any discussion that follows.

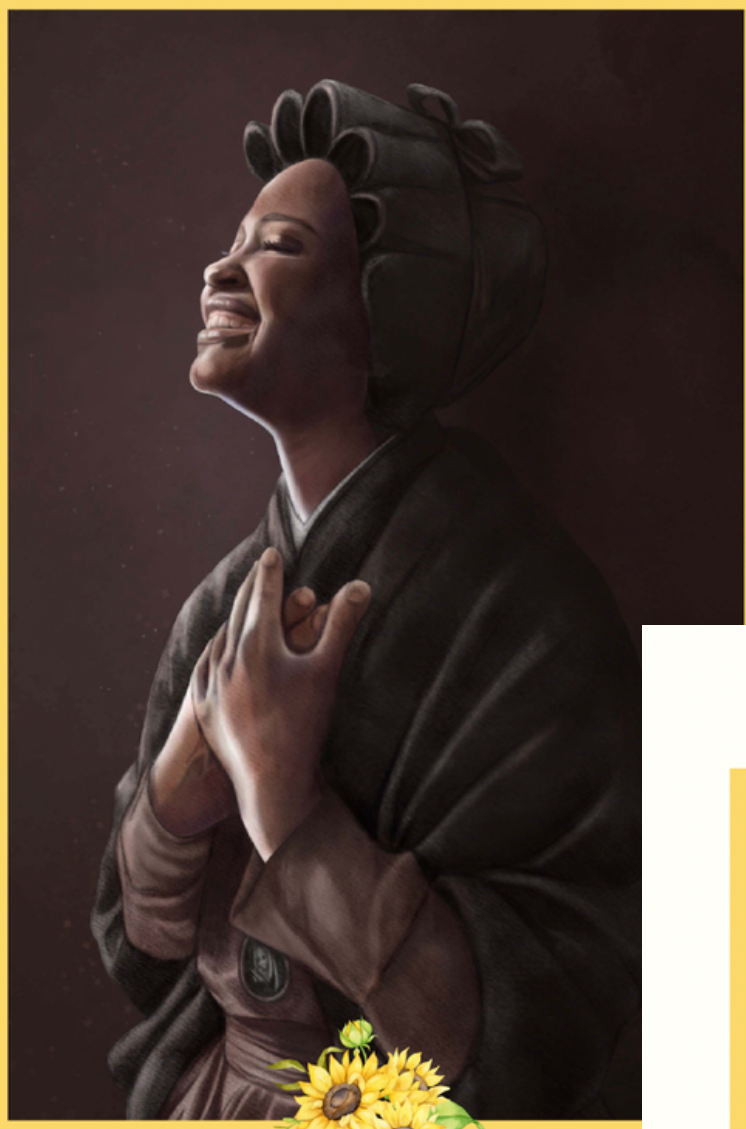
[Sound of Freedom Discussion Guide](#)





St. Josephine Bakhita

## Prayer Card (English)



### A Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita

St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering.

Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found proper redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith. Help all survivors find healing from their wounds. We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

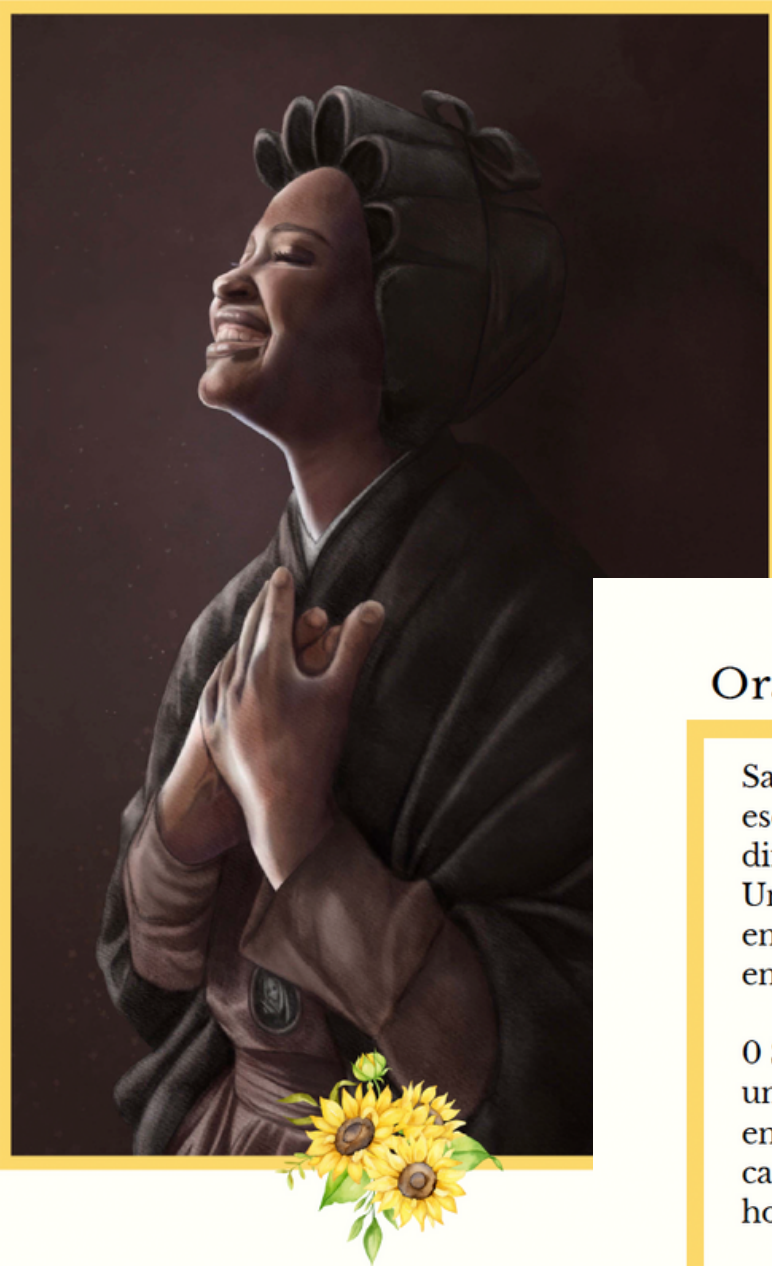
Amen.





St. Josephine Bakhita

## Prayer Card (Spanish)



### Oración a Santa Josefina Bakhita

Santa Josefina Bakhita, fuiste vendida como esclava cuando eras niña y soportaste dificultades y sufrimientos indecibles. Una vez liberada de tu esclavitud física, encontraste la redención adecuada en tu encuentro con Cristo y su Iglesia.

O St. Bakhita, ayuda a todos los atrapados en un estado de esclavitud; Interceda ante Dios en su nombre para que sean liberados de sus cadenas de cautiverio. Aquellos a quienes el hombre esclaviza, que Dios los libere.

Proporcionar consuelo a los sobrevivientes de la esclavitud y deja que te miren como un ejemplo de esperanza y fe. Ayude a todos los sobrevivientes a encontrar la curación de sus heridas. Pedimos sus oraciones e intercesiones por los esclavizados entre nosotros.

Amén.



# Suggested Intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful

*Please choose some of the following to be included among the intercessions in your parish during the February 8th World Day of Prayer, Reflection, and Action against Human Trafficking.*

## **The Pope, Bishops, and Catholic Faithful**

- For Pope Francis, that our Heavenly Father may gift him with deep wisdom as he calls the Church to struggle against the evil of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.
- For our bishop, [name here], that he may be encouraged by our prayers and support to lead God's people in building a culture that respects human dignity, we pray to the Lord.
- For the bishops, that they continue to be leaders in the fight against modern-day slavery, both domestically and abroad, we pray to the Lord.
- For our priests and deacons, that they may boldly proclaim the Church's teaching on human dignity and the Church's teaching on human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.
- For all Catholics, that God inspires them to take action in their local communities to support and protect survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

## **Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking**

- For everyone who is trapped in a situation of slavery, that God will help to liberate them from their chains, we pray to the Lord.
- For an end to human trafficking, that the dignity of all of God's children will be protected, we pray to the Lord.
- For those caught up in a situation of slavery, that their perpetrators be brought to justice, and that they might find a path to healing, we pray to the Lord.
- For survivors of slavery, that God guide them to a path down which they might find wholeness and peace, we pray to the Lord.



# Suggested Intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful

## Government Officials

- For the President of the United States and government leaders, that Jesus, the Son of God, will help them understand the dignity of all human persons and support legislation that better protects vulnerable populations in our midst, we pray to the Lord.
- For policymakers in our nation, God grants them the wisdom to enact laws that provide greater protection for victims and survivors of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord.

## Additional Intercessions

- For law enforcement, that God grants them the wisdom to recognize situations of forced labor and sexual slavery while working to protect its victims and punish its perpetrators, we pray to the Lord.
- For the media, that they will make awareness raising of the problem of human trafficking a priority, we pray to the Lord.
- For social service providers, that God will grant them the strength and continued commitment to help survivors of human trafficking and support them on their path to wholeness, we pray to the Lord.
- For perpetrators of slavery, that they repent of their evil ways and turn to God for forgiveness, we pray to the Lord.
- For our neighbors, coworkers, friends, fellow Christians, and all people, that they may increase in their awareness of the problem of human trafficking and become a voice in the public square calling for its abolition, we pray to the Lord.





## Migration and Refugee Services

Renewing Hope. Seeking Justice.  
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



## Closing Remarks and References

Thank you for reading our anti-trafficking toolkit for the year 2024. We are working hard to combat the issues of human trafficking worldwide. We have additional resources to share such as our Anti-Trafficking Calendar for 2024.

Also, we would like to invite you to our St. Josephine Bakhita Working Group Prayer Service. On the 8th of every month, we host a prayer service to discuss and pray for victims of trafficking along with co-occurring issues that enhance victimization of trafficking. This prayer service takes place **monthly** through the **QR Code**.

# CONTACT US

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Migration and Refugee Services

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