

B&C Reflection

HOPE BELIEVE, LIVE and GIVE

CLOSING PRAYER:

Living God,
You freed the people of Israel,
From cruel slavery in Egypt,
And led them to a promised land
flowing with milk and honey.
We ask you to liberate today all the
children, women, and men,
Who are enslaved by the cruel yoke
of human trafficking -
In our nation, and around the world.

God of liberation,
Free your children from their bondage,
Heal them of their wounds,
Protect them from further harm,
Turn the hearts of their oppressors.
And sustain them with hope,
For a new beginning in safety
and peace.

Amen

*(February 8, is the International Day of Prayer
for Victims of Human Trafficking. It is also the
feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, the patron
of trafficking victims.)*

CLOSING HYMN:

Be Not Afraid

You shall cross the barren desert
But you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
Though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words
to foreign men
And they will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.

Chorus:

***Be not afraid,
I go before you always,
Come follow me,
and I will give you rest.***

If you pass thru' raging waters
in the sea
You shall not drown.
If you walk amid the burning flames
You shall not be harmed.
If you stand before the power of hell
And death is at your side.
Know that I am with you -
through it all. (C)



EVENT: **World Day Against Human Trafficking**

SOCIAL MEDIA TREND: **#speakup**

INTRODUCTION:

30th July is "World Day Against Human Trafficking". It is a sombre reminder that every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Traffickers threaten, force, coerce, abduct, use fraud, deception, abuse their power over the vulnerable, or give payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim. Sexual exploitation is the most common form of exploitation followed by forced labour while forced begging, forced marriage, the selling of children as child soldiers, as well as for removal of organs are other reasons for human trafficking. Women make up 49% and girls 23% of all victims of trafficking.

OPENING PRAYER

Prayer to End Human Trafficking

(An excerpt from School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), Canadian Province)

Loving and compassionate God,
We come before you in prayer.
We cry out together against the degrading
practice of human trafficking.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand up
against the evil that makes it possible,
For people to buy and sell and trade others.

We pray for it to end. Amen

OPENING HYMN:

By Our Love

Brothers, let us come together
Walking in the Spirit, there's much to be done.
We will come reaching, out from our comforts
And they will know us by our love.

Sisters, we were made for kindness
We can pierce the darkness as He shines through us.
We will come reaching, with a song of healing
And they will know us by our love!

(C) The time is now
Come church arise
Love with His hands
See with His eyes.
Bind it around you
Let it never leave you
And they will know us by our love.

Children, you are hope for justice
Stand firm in the truth now, set your hearts above.
You will be reaching, long after we're gone
And they will know you by your love! **(C)**

DIALOGUE

Each person is made in the image of God, is loved immeasurably by Him, and has inherent worth. Every person is precious - the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. 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. Modern-day slavery - inherently rejects this principle, showing absolute contempt for human beings.

Commitment to end slavery in all its forms is rooted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which forbids any act leading to the enslavement of humans - a sin against a person's dignity and fundamental human rights. This commitment was reaffirmed during the Second Vatican Council; 'slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, [and] disgraceful working conditions where [people] are treated as mere tools for profit' are **infamies** and a **supreme dishonour** to the creator.'

Tragedies like the 39 Vietnamese migrants whose bodies were found in a refrigerated truck are all too common. This fatal journey sheds a grim light on what smugglers call the **CO2 Route** - the uncertain and dangerous trip that many undertake from Southeast Asia in search for better opportunities in Europe.

One of the victims, 26-year-old Pham Thi Tra My, was hoping to find a job as a manicurist in London. "Mom, I love you and Dad so much! I'm dying because I can't breathe," she wrote in a text to her mother in the early hours of 23 October 2019, hours before the bodies were found.

There are all sorts of painful and distressing reasons people leave their home countries; conflict, political, religious or sexuality-based persecution. People are so desperate to leave their country and get to safety, they are prepared to risk their lives. They feel this is better than what they are escaping from.

We should encourage our local schools to include human trafficking in their curriculum. Use our social media platforms to raise awareness about human trafficking. It is important to know that traffickers often target people who are going through a difficult time or who lack strong support systems. Be a positive influence in a young person's life by encouraging honesty and openness. Churches can hold awareness events and community forums.

Share your thoughts with your BEC members.

- Share your thoughts and concerns on how human life is seen as a commodity.
- Have a conversation on steps you can take to 'love your neighbour.'

DISCERNMENT

Proverbs 31:8-9

Source: Jerusalem Bible

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

REFLECTION:

- READ the text aloud and LISTEN with openness.
- READ it silently by yourself until a word or phrase touches or strikes you.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through the word or phrase?
- What do you say to the Lord in response to his Word?
- Share in small groups (3-4 persons) the verse that has touched you.

DEEDS:

- As a child of God, how can I be friendlier towards migrants and refugees in my community?
- As a child of God, what can I do to be a better listener?
- As a child of God, how can I share and teach children and teenagers about the value of every person?

