

# **Human Trafficking Ritual 2020**

## **From Project IRENE**

### **Instrumental Music**

#### **Opening**

**Creator God, we thank you for the diversity of gifts that you have blessed us with through the centuries, today, and tomorrow. We honor those who are struggling to manifest your diversity of gifts because they are among the millions being trafficked. With the diversity of gifts we have received, we ask for courage to support these persons who are trafficked. May we be informed, wide-eyed, fearless, and generous in sharing our diverse gifts with our sisters and brothers who are trafficked. Amen.**

#### **Reader**

**Human trafficking ought to concern every person, because it's a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at the social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name—modern slavery.**

**—President Barack Obama, Sept. 25, 2012**

#### **Ponder**

#### **Reader**

**The expansion of 'prevention' strategies is laudable. However, unless we address the underlying socio-economic context that gives rise to human trafficking, until we better understand the changing context of race, gender, politics, labor, and migration in the rapidly globalizing world, we cannot dismantle the cultural superstructure which supports the trafficking of human beings. If we hope to end human trafficking, then we must be willing to examine the power dynamics that allow some to enslave others. If we hope to end**

exploitation, then we must be willing to disassemble hierarchies of every sort. If we hope to establish justice and equality, then we must continually ask 'why?'

—Sisters Against Trafficking , May 1, 2019

## **Ponder**

### **Facts**

Let us consider these facts about human trafficking.

The total number of trafficking victims in the United States amounts to hundreds of thousands when estimates of minors and adults, sex trafficking and labor trafficking are aggregated. (Source: Polaris)

Human trafficking is considered the third most lucrative illegal activity after the illegal sale of arms and drugs.

Estimates of the number of victims of human trafficking remain in the tens of millions. Worldwide convictions of human traffickers are fewer than 10,000.

Signs of trafficking in the hotel industry include guests seeming disoriented, malnourished, wearing the same clothes day after day, multiple bruises in different stages of healing, avoidance of eye contact, inability to speak freely.

—Sharon Lockwood, Marriot Hotel Manager

“The {victim’s} wounds were inflicted on the unconscious level of their personalities and since there is no time in the unconscious, these injuries are always as fresh and traumatic as the moment they were inflicted.”

—Eugene Cullen Kennedy

## **Ponder**

Let us pray....

Response: Spirit of Justice, increase our awareness of human trafficking.

Law enforcement officials in Kentucky say incidents of human trafficking increase when a city hosts a major sporting event. This includes bringing international victims of human trafficking from other states.

Response

“My family wanted no part of me after all I had put them through. An old boyfriend would take me back, and I knew what that meant. ... If I went back to

him I would have been dead by now.” (Reflections from a survivor of human trafficking)

Response

Pope Francis led Good Friday services dedicated to human trafficking and the plight of immigrants in 2019 at the Way of the Cross service at Rome’s Colosseum.

Response

Young men are trafficked as well as young women. Henry (name changed to protect his identity) was trafficked by his mother at age 7. She sold him to pedophiles to pay the bills. After he was removed from his mother’s care, he was placed in foster homes where he was sexually abused.

Response

Airports Council International published in 2019 the first edition of its ACI Combatting Human Trafficking Handbook. This free resource provides real-life examples of the work airports are doing to stop human trafficking.

Response

A variety of faith-based groups issued calls to governmental, ngos, and other international organizations to intensify their efforts to address human trafficking. RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking in Persons), one of the signatories of this call, reprinted on their website a Human Trafficking Ritual created by Project IRENE.

Response

I was raped by my boyfriend and a group of his friends. After that I was pimped by another guy. A lawyer convinced me to testify against the trafficker so I could get my life back. I owe that lawyer my life. --Identity protected

Response

What was helpful to me was education about mindfulness and the effects of trauma. –Survivor of human trafficking in transition

Response

Always keep in mind transition back into the community is difficult. We are beaten down, so even decision making becomes stressful. –Survivor of human trafficking in transition

Response

Helen (name changed) said people asked her why she was always sad. She had been trafficked at 7 years old. A neighbor woman, who lived near the family who trafficked her, noticed that there was something wrong. One day the neighbor slipped her a piece of paper with her telephone number. Each week Helen took out the trash and watered the lawn. Her neighbor was always waiting there in her car. One day Helen dropped the hose and ran to the woman's car. Helen reflected: "She changed my whole life."

#### Response

Harold (name changed) was 33 when he paid \$4000.00 that he had borrowed from family and friends for a visa and a flight to the United States. He did not realize the money went to traffickers. He arrived in the United States with two other job aspirants. When they arrived, they were told that there were no jobs. They found a job packing DVDs at a manufacturer. Harold netted \$40.00 per week. Then he found other work. A volunteer at a faith-based organization helped him. He eventually became a U.S. citizen. His wife and two children came to the United States to join him.

#### Response

### Possible Actions

Contact the Governor of your state. Ask her/him to request that the hotline number for anti-trafficking **–888-373-7888**—be featured prominently on all state websites. Note: this toll free hotline answers calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year in more than 200 languages. In over 9 years, the Hotline has directly assisted over 20,000 survivors of trafficking and identified 39,000 survivors.

For more information, read, watch related videos and TV programs, check websites, attend plays related to human trafficking. Some possible resources include Two Little Girls, on the web at <http://www.twolittlegirls.org>; Faces of Human Trafficking, a series of videos available at the following web address <https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/publicawareness.html>; Finding Freedom Was Just the Beginning, Shari Ho with Melodie Fox; Freedom Has a Name, Shari Ho with Melodie Fox; Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern Day Child Slave, Shyima Hall; mending soul, Steven R. Tracy; Trauma and Recovery, Judith L. Herman, MD; Ricky and Julie, Shay Cullen; also Stop Trafficking monthly newsletter, online at [sistersagainstrafficking.org](http://sistersagainstrafficking.org)

Contact your State Representative and State Senator to find out what bills have been passed in the state where you live. *Note: State level, not Federal level for this request...*

Keep survivors of human trafficking in your daily prayers as well as those who are still caught in the web of human trafficking.

## **Special Dates to Remember**

### **Those Who Have Been or Still Are Being Trafficked**

**January 11: National Human Trafficking Awareness Day**

**February 8: International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.** February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, canonized in 2000. She bore 144 physical scars which she endured after she was kidnapped at 9 years old and sold into slavery. She died in 1947.

**June 20: World Refugee Day**

**July 30: World Day of Prayer Against Trafficking in Persons**

**September 27 World Tourism Day**

**September 29: World Day for Migrants and Refugees**

**October 10: International Day of the Girl**

**October 24: United Nations Day**

**November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**

**Month of December: Reminder child victims of human trafficking in prayer**

**Anytime in grief rituals: Inclusion of those killed in human trafficking situations**

## **Closing**

*Repeat after the reader.*

**“Hope is the Ground  
for courage,  
freedom  
and joy. ...  
Hope is the unblinking conviction  
that God’s promises  
are relentlessly underway  
toward fulfillment.”  
Amen. So be it. Yes, Amen.**

--“The Company of God’s Peculiar Hope Offers a Way to Keep Fear from Overpowering Us,” Walter Brueggemann, *Sojourners*, July 2019

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