



Digest 24
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Human Trafficking

The scourge of trafficking in persons continues unabated. Pope Francis is on record as having said that human trafficking is worsening and that in some instances the evidence brings one to doubt the real commitment of some important players. It is estimated that women and girls constitute 79% of victims of modern slavery.

The link below takes you to one of the best-produced and most informative, disturbing and poignant guides to modern day slavery.

https://www.cfr.org/interactives/modern-slavery/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=educators&utm_content=011018&sp_mid=55845559&sp_rid=cGVhcnNvbkbPjYWZyaWNhLmNvbQS2#!/section3/item-24?utm_medium=social_earned&utm_source=tw&utm_campaign=modern-slavery&utm_term=cfr-share&utm_content=011718

Below is a link to one of the responses by the faith community to halt trafficking by providing girls with skills so that they are not as vulnerable to the lures of traffickers.

<http://globalsistersreport.org/news/equality/young-vietnamese-women-train-avoid-slave-labor-trafficking-51406>

At an ecumenical service at St Paul's Outside the Walls, Pope Francis specially mentioned the fight against human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery as something which Christians should work on ecumenically.

<http://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-01/pope-celebrates-vespers-for-conversion-of-saint-paul.html>

8th February marks the annual day of awareness of the scourge of human trafficking on the church calendar. It is also the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese slave who was trafficked to Italy. This year's focus looks at the link between migrants and human trafficking. The Santa Marta Group (which is an engagement between the heads of police forces around the world and Church leadership, seeking to establish policies for dealing with this scourge, increasing the political will to deal with it, and looking at best practices for police/pastoral liaison) met in Rome on 8th and 9th February. The third and fourth links go to Pope Francis' talk to the Group.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/pope-asks-people-work-together-end-human-trafficking>

<https://zenit.org/articles/pope-encourages-santa-marta-group-in-fight-against-human-trafficking/>

<https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-santa-marta-group-in-the-vatican/>

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/02/12/180212e.html>

One of the emerging issues in the trafficking arena is that of organ trafficking. Recently the Vatican hosted a conference on the topic.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Chinese-delegation-attends-Vatican-meeting--43329.html>

An Australian diplomat hailed Pope Francis as the most vociferous and consistent campaigner against all forms of modern slavery in the world at present, and highlighted some of the disturbing statistics around trafficking.

www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-given-thunderous-salute-for-his-anti-slavery-commitment

At a side event at the UN on 15th March, Archbishop Auza spoke of the trafficking of women and children, especially those in rural areas. He spoke of their vulnerability due to compounded marginalisation.

<https://zenit.org/articles/archbishop-auza-need-to-protect-rural-women-and-girls/>

The Archdiocese of Sydney has stepped up its efforts to combat trafficking in persons and other forms of modern slavery, setting a good example for other local churches to follow.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2018-03/australia-sydney-archdiocese-slavery-human-trafficking.html>

The vexed issue of trafficking in persons being linked to prostitution is documented in the next link. Pope Francis, in his encounter with the youth in Rome in preparation for the upcoming Synod on Youth, also raised this issue when he met with survivors of trafficking. The Pope asked young people to take up the fight against trafficking, (second link below). He also commented that using trafficked women as prostitutes was not making love, but torturing women.

<http://www.lastampa.it/2018/03/23/vaticaninsider/eng/inquiries-and-interviews/prostitution-trafficking-in-african-minors-between-mafias-and-social-networks-fJVNYgInhgtefElg9l0xOK/pagina.html>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-forgiveness-christians-buy-sex-women-prostitution-vatican-rome-a8263666.html>

In Indonesia large protests have been held in Jakarta as groups begin to tally the high cost in human lives that trafficking in persons is inflicting. They have asked President Joko Widodo to take special steps to halt the flow of trafficking.

https://international.la-croix.com/news/widodo-urged-to-crack-down-on-human-trafficking/7242?utm_source=UCAN&utm_campaign=From-our-partners&utm_medium=Referral

There have been dire warnings about the fate of children crossing borders as they exit Venezuela; they are vulnerable and traffickers pick on them. Recruiters for armed formations and criminal syndicates are also active in these areas. It is estimated that over half a million people left Venezuela last year. What is seen in sharp focus on the borders of Venezuela is also rampant in other parts of the world.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/children-fleeing-unrest-and-hunger-venezuela-facing-protection-and-health-risks-they>

Fifteen Anglican Bishops in the UK have written an Easter pastoral letter in which they ask the faithful to report any signs of modern slavery. They say that the UK officially recorded 5 145 victims of modern day slavery, but tens of thousands exist below the radar as it is a hidden crime.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-asks-worshippers-to-report-signs-of-modern-slavery-df5lgmcs>

Peter-John Pearson
Director