



**INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

PRESS RELEASE 25 NOVEMBER 2014

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING
8 FEBRUARY 2015**

Pope Frances has strongly denounced many times the trafficking of human beings, defining it as «**a crime against humanity**» and calling on all to fight and looking after the victims. Responding to the Holy Father's plea

**The Pontifical Council of Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
International Union of Superiors General (UISG and USG)**

promote an

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The First International Day will be celebrated in all dioceses and parishes in the world,
in the groups and schools

8 FEBRUARY 2015

the Feast Day of Josephine Bakhita

a Sudanese slave, freed, who became a Canossian nun, and was declared a Saint in 2000

The phenomenon

Human trafficking is one of the worst examples of slavery in the XXI Century. This concerns the whole world. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Unodc) roughly **21 million people**, often very poor and vulnerable, are victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced labour and begging, illegal organ removal, domestic servitude and forced marriages, illegal adoption and other forms of exploitation.

Each year, around 2.5 million people are victims of trafficking and slavery: 60 percent are women and children. They often suffer abuse and unspeakable violence.

On the other hand, for traffickers and pimps, this is one of the most lucrative illegal activities in the world, generating a total of **32 billion dollars** a year. It is the third most profitable "business" after drugs and arms trafficking.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

What does the Church do

For several years, the Catholic Church, and in particular the congregations of women religious, have worked in many parts of the world to raise creating awareness on this scourge, prevent trafficking in human beings, denounce traffickers and exploiters and, above all, help and protect the victims. Thanks to Pope Frances, more emphasis is being placed on the issue of human trafficking and this has resulted in concrete actions and initiatives promoted also by the Vatican Dicasteries.

Goals

The primary objective of the International Day is to create greater awareness on this phenomenon and to reflect on the overall situation of violence and injustice that affect so many people, who have no voice, do not count, and are no one: they are simply slaves.

Another goal is to attempt to provide solutions to counter this modern form of slavery by taking concrete actions. For this, it's necessary to stress the need to ensure rights, freedom and dignity to all trafficked persons, reduced to slavery. On the other hand, we must denounce both the criminal organisations and those who use and abuse the poverty and vulnerability of victims to transform them into goods for pleasure and gain.

The International Day Against Human Trafficking 2015 will be a significant addition to the year dedicated to Consecrated Life, and could serve as a stimulus for all the religious men and women around the world to read the "*signs of the times*", and rethink prophetically the present and future of consecrated life itself.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS SUPPORTED PERSONALLY BY POPE FRANCES

«Trafficking in persons is a crime against humanity. We must join forces to free the victims and stop this crime which is increasingly aggressive, that threatens, in addition to individuals, the founding values of society and also security and international justice, as well as the economy, the family structure and social life».

Pope Frances, December 12, 2013

For further information:

UISG: International Union of Superiors General

Piazza di Ponte Sant'Angelo, 28 – 00186 Roma, Italia

Tel:+39 06 68 400 20 / Fax:+39 06 68 400 23

uisgolan@uisg1.tuttopmi.it / uisgseg@tin.it / www.uisg.org

With the support of: The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Caritas Internationalis, Talita Kum, The USMI Counter-trafficking Office, Slaves no More, The World Union of Catholic Women Organisations (WUCWO), Community "Papa Giovanni XXIII", The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), The International Catholic Migration Commission, The International Forum Catholic Action, and the Canossian Daughters of Charity