Ending Trafficking begins with you

From the President.
Sister Imelda Poole, IBVM.

Linked with the explosion of the internet and instant communication today, the ease in which we can be gathered for communication has led to an incredible shift in the personal narratives of everybody. The changing cultures consequent to this explosion of communication, impacts the unfolding story of the individual and also the local, national and global community. Now this technological revolution has led to the ease in which this technical knowhow is being used in the development of the deep net where secret criminal gangs are being organised and where the human traffickers ply their trade. The law has not yet caught up with the changing, global, phenomena. We can speak of a breakdown of law. Human freedom, a human right, is denied millions of people who become trapped in the nets set by the traffickers for those who are desperate for work and who are ensnared by the marketing of a million goods to feed the appetite of the thousands craving for a better life. This exposure of the internet to those vulnerable to being trafficked is a lack of protection. It leads to a denial of human rights. Being protected from the criminals is a human right. They readily take away a person’s liberty. Poverty, lack of education and health care is a denial of human rights and is not accessible for millions of people across the globe. These are the people who are vulnerable to human trafficking to the selling of organs, to the buying and selling of millions of children every day. Easter is a time when we think of new life. Are we prepared to stop, to think, to be quiet and ready to look at a tree as a tree, a person as a person, a human right as a human right?? Do we really feel responsible for ensuring all people have the possibility of life in its fullness?

The Way of the Cross.
RENATE member Marie Hélène Halligon, RGS, has prepared a beautiful Lenten Reflection, entitled “The Way of the Cross.” It is available at www.renate-europe.net

IN THIS ISSUE.
• Welcome from RENATE President; Easter Reflection “The Way if the Cross.”
• RENATE Training on “Migrants and Trafficking;” “St. Bakhita Day,” 2017; British Ambassador to the Holy See interviews RENATE President.
• RENATE DVD Called to give Voice to the Voiceless; UN Gift Box Initiative; On International Women’s Day, the President of Malta visits Shelter run by the Good Shepherd Sisters.
• RENATE members in France create new website; RENATE presents at the “Voices of Faith” Conference at the Vatican; CSW 61 at the UN.
• SOLWODI Austria opens new shelter & counselling Centre in Innsbruck; Pope Francis addresses EU Heads of State & Governments; New Criminal Law Bill announced in Ireland; DVD “Made in God’s Image,” produced by CARITAS Slovakia.

www.renate-europe.net
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29 RENATE members gathered at the Conference Centre Soeterbeeck, Ravenstein, in The Netherlands, from the 19-25 March, 2017, to attend training on the topic of Human Trafficking and Migrants.

Mr. Gerard Moorman, on behalf of the Dutch Conference of Religious and Iivonne van de Kar, RENATE member from the Netherlands hosting the training, in the local context regarding Human Trafficking and Migration.

An extensive programme in action to support considerations for the Safe Return and Re-integration of migrants who chose to return to their homelands. It was both a challenging and enriching week, as the delegates gained new experiences and learned through reflection and sharing of experiences.

Full report will be available shortly, at www.renate-europe.net

HOLY SEE : FIGHTING MODERN SLAVERY.
The Ambassador to the Holy See, H.E. Ms. Sally Axworthy reflected on the work of Imelda Poole, IBVM, President of RENATE Europe, in celebration of International Women’s Day, 8 March, 2017.

Ms. Axworthy explored the early years of Imelda’s ministry and how these formative years influenced her work into the future.

Full feature is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/fighting-modern-slavery

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING 8TH FEBRUARY, 2017.

St. Bakhita’s Day was celebrated in a myriad of ways throughout the RENATE network. Prayer Services and Liturgies were held in churches and congregational houses as both Religious and lay people gathered in prayer across the network. The central theme this year “They are just Children, not Slaves,” was recommended by Pope Francis and animated world-wide responses which saw events taking place throughout the month of February.

Talitha Kum shared an extensive range of resources, which included Prayer Services, suggestions for reading materials, film and addresses for international connections.

Initiatives undertaken by the RENATE network included screening of the RENATE video “Called to Give Voice to the Voiceless,” at several venues in the Netherlands; the Medaille Trust in the UK undertook a ten mile walk to create awareness and raise funds for the victims of modern slavery; CARITAS Slovakia held a special Liturgy at the Franciscan church in Bratislava, where survivors shared their stories.

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Be part of RENATE network! Follow us on Twitter. Become a fan on Facebook. Sign up for Website Membership.
Anne Kelleher, Editor.
RENATE FILM RESOURCE  ‘CALLED TO GIVE VOICE TO THE VOICELESS.”

The RENATE film created by film-maker, Sr. Iva Kúšiková, SSpS and launched at the 2nd RENATE Assembly in Rome, in November 2016, is a powerful awareness-raising and educational resource which is increasingly in use throughout the RENATE Network.

In addition to being screened at Film Festivals in both Albania and the UK, the film has also been successfully incorporated as an additional resource at meetings and training events in Albania. According to RENATE president, Imelda Poole, IBVM, it is making a significant impact. People are much more responsive to the call to help in the prevention of Trafficking and Exploitation as a result of watching the film. Because of its effectiveness in highlighting the victim’s voice and the possibilities for restorative practices, Imelda encourages each of us to use the film widely.

RENATE member Ivonne van de Kar shared a further example of its use, when she held film screenings at several events in the Netherlands as she was giving presentations in honour of St. Bakhita Day. Ivonne has found that the film conveys much more than words alone can convey, as it shines a light on human experiences and the voices behind such experiences.

UN GIFT BOX INITIATIVE, 2017.

APT Ireland (Act to Prevent Trafficking), together with the Loreto Congregation, have showcased the UN Giftbox at ten locations throughout Ireland during the month of March. Spearheaded by Sr. Elizabeth Byrne, IBVM and supported by her colleagues in APT and a wide network of volunteers, the GiftBox tour began at St. Peter’s Church, Drogheda on the 1st of March and then moved nationwide to venues in Dublin, Cork, Tralee, Limerick, Galway, Athlone and Maynooth. Members of the public were surprised to learn that trafficking would occur on the small island of Ireland and were grateful for the opportunity to learn as much as possible about this crime, by means of the GiftBox.

ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY, THE PRESIDENT OF MALTA, VISITED DAR MERHBIA BIK FOUNDATION, MALTA.

It was a special Women’s Day this year for the Dar Merhba Bik Foundation, a Shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors, their children and the staff as they hosted a visit from the President of Malta, Her Excellency, Dr. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca.

President Coleiro Preca expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Sr. Doris Saliba, Local Leader and RENATE member, Sr. Margaret Gonzi, RGS, Director of Dar Merhba Bik Foundation, whom she said were pioneers in opening the first Domestic Violence Shelter in Malta back in 1980 and which to date, has given shelter and solace to over 3000 clients and their families.

The President also thanked the Sisters for being generous and courageous in offering part of their convent, to host and care for a community of migrants in the Balzan Open Centre through Sr. Agnes Azzopardi, an elderly Sister, and her group of volunteers who support her in her work.

The President and the Dar Merhba Bik Foundation promised to continue working closely together at the shelter, in support of those most in need.
RENATE members in France, have been proactive in strengthening the network and following the RENATE 2nd European Assembly held in Roma in November, 2016, the members in France have created a designated RENATE portal for sharing news and resources in France. With the establishment of the website, not only is it possible to immediately access data, it also facilitates people whose English language capacities are such that it is easier to have direct provision of information in French, rather than in English.

Among the latest features on the site is a critical Analysis of the French Government’s National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2014-2016 and thereafter. Log in to access information, read about all the activities underway and lend your support http://renatefrance.wordpress.com

RENATE member, Sr. Monica Chickwe, SOM, presents at the “Voices of Faith” International Conference in the Vatican, 6 March, 2017.

Voices of Faith is an annual event, bringing together voices of women from around the globe, to mark International Women’s Day. The theme for 2017 was “Stirring the Waters: Making the Impossible Possible.” At the special Liturgy, Sr. Monica Chickwe, SOM, felt honoured to present her reflections on the question “Who is my brother?” In her reflection, Monica challenged us to think more deeply and broadly, about our understanding of the concept of “Sin” and how we each are guilty of committing sin against humanity through our neglect of personal responsibility.

Watch the Voices of Faith 2017 event at the Vatican, at http://voicesoffaith.org/event/


Lynda Dearlove rsm, Founder of Women@theWell, was a panel member at the CSW 61 Side Event ‘Economically Empowering Trafficking Survivors to Stay Permanently Off the Streets’ on 22 March. Women@theWell is a women-only drop-in centre in Kings Cross, London, dedicated to supporting women whose lives are affected by or at risk of being affected by prostitution. The side event, organised by the Holy See, was televised and archived on the UN Web TV channel. The theme “Shifting the Burden from Survivors.”

The recording can be watched here. Sr Lynda is introduced at 50:16 and concludes at 59:54. Comments to Sr. Lynda at Lynda.dearlove@watw.org.uk
RENATE MEMBER, ANDRÉA BEZÁKOVÁ, CJ, APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF SOLWODI, AUSTRIA’S NEW SHELTER AND COUNSELLING CENTRE IN INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA.

Since the 1st of February, 2017, RENATE member, Andrea Bezáková (Bohdana), has assumed the position of Director of a new shelter and counselling centre in Innsbruck, the Austrian Tyrol. This new centre is sponsored by SOLWODI Austria, under the Chairpersonship of RENATE member Patricia Erber, SDS, in conjunction with a number of Religious congregations and aid organisations.

The centre in Innsbruck has opened following SOLWODI’s consultations with regional conferences of Religious and with civil society organisations, to consider the possibility of establishing an additional support centre to cater for the needs of women in western Austria, who have become victims of human trafficking, forced prostitution, exploitation and violence.

The operation of the new centre will be based on SOLWODI’s experiences at its counselling and services centres in Vienna and eastern Austria, which offer assistance and support to victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution.

A professional psychotherapist and experienced social worker and counsellor, Bohdana shares the shelter with five trafficking victims and is very busy meeting the various demands of establishing a new centre. New staff are being recruited to meet the demand for the professional services.


‘...It is not enough to handle the grave crisis of immigration of recent years as if it were a mere numerical or economic problem, or a question of security. The immigration issue poses a deeper question, one that is primarily cultural. What kind of culture does Europe propose today? The fearfulness that is becoming more and more evident has its root cause in the loss of ideals. Without an approach inspired by those ideals, we end up dominated by the fear that others will wrench us from our usual habits, deprive us of familiar comforts, and somehow call into question a lifestyle that all too often consists of material prosperity alone.’

IRELAND CRIMINALISES PURCHASE OF SEX—NEW CRIMINAL LAW BILL.

Aimed at tackling sex trafficking and the protection of women, new legislation in Ireland which criminalises the purchase of sex, has made headlines around the world. RUHAMA, a support group for women affected by prostitution and have helped women trafficked from Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Nigeria and Romania, believe that although the law may not end prostitution, it will make Ireland less attractive to traffickers as it will reduce demand. The new Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill also strengthens laws on child pornography & exploitation. More at www.oireachtas.ie

NEW DVD FROM CHARITA SLOVAKIA.

“Made in God’s image” is a new DVD created by CHARITA Slovakia, that focuses on the Human Trafficking situation in the following central-eastern European countries: Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary and role of church in combating Human Trafficking. Devised by the same team who created the Two Little Girls production, the film has English subtitles and is available at http://www.obchodsludmi.sk

The original website of the campaign is this: http://www.twolittlegirls.org/