



8th February, 2015 - First International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking

On Sunday, the 8th of February next, parishes and Dioceses throughout the world are invited to join together in prayer, to celebrate the first International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking.

In addition to our prayers, our ministry to the victims of human trafficking and our ongoing work to prevent human trafficking, "The primary objective of the International day is to create greater awareness of 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." (Official Vatican Network News. VA).

The 8th of February was selected as it is the feast day of Josephine Bakhita, a young woman from Darfur in the Sudan, who was enslaved as a nine year old child, but managed to break free some 20 years' later when she joined the Canossian religious sisters in Italy.

Through the loving care of the sisters, who nurtured Bakhita's spiritual foundations, the word "Master" took on a different meaning to that which Bakhita had been accustomed. Gradually, Bakhita came to know of the infinite and unconditional love our Lord and master has for her and for each one of us. Such witness became a source of inspiration and hope for Bakhita, who expressed the certainty of her faith when she said:

"I am definitely loved and whatever happens to me- I am awaited by this love. And so my life is good."

Mindful of the gospel of MK 3:22-30 says "...If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand...", an International Day of Prayer is a powerful observance, which we can deploy for the benefit of all who are suffering at the hands of traffickers.

Bakhita is an example to follow. A woman with a powerful faith, serving God, doing God's will in order that those who are suffering, may find solace and hope for the future.

Bakhita was beatified in 1992 and canonised in 2000. Her feast day, the 8th of February, is designated by the church as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking.

Let us join together in prayer across the world, to strengthen our faith foundation and ministry, to make God's love and compassion known to those who feel abandoned.

