

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



St. Josephine Bakhita

Patroness of
Human Trafficking

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On February 8th we celebrate the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman who was sold into slavery as a child. Eventually she was sold to an Italian diplomat and taken to Italy, where she was later brought to freedom through the help of the Canossian Daughters of Charity. Through their guidance, she learned about God, was baptized, and faithfully served God as a Sister of Charity until her death in 1947. In October 2000, Josephine Bakhita was canonized by Pope John Paul II and has been designated as the Patroness of Human Trafficking victims. The Church has designated her feast day as an **International day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking**. Since 2014, the Sisters of Bon Secours have committed ourselves to “cry out against human trafficking”. This issue of JPIC News focuses on our efforts to live out this commitment through education, direct service and advocacy.

February
JPIC Days of Remembrance

February 1-7
World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 8
Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita
International Day of Prayer and
Awareness Against Human Trafficking

“Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the Body of Christ.” Pope Francis

February 11
World Day of the Sick

February 20
World Day of Social Justice

February 26
International
STAND UP to Bullying Day



Human Trafficking

- The 2016 Global Slavery index estimates that 45.8 million men, women and children are currently trapped in modern slavery, which it defines as a combination of human trafficking, forced labor, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children
 - 68% of them are trapped in forced labor.
 - 26% of them are children.
 - 55% are women and girls.
- The International Labor Organization estimates that forced labor and human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry worldwide.
- The U.S. Department of Labor has identified 139 goods from 75 countries made by forced and child labor.



Oh God, we didn't see them but you did --
The hundreds and thousands of human beings
trafficked each year to join the millions who are trapped in modern day slavery.
Under terrible conditions, they work in factories, plough fields,
harvest crops, work quarries, fill brothels, clean home and haul water.
Many are children with tiny fingers for weaving rugs and small shoulders for bearing rifles.
Their labor is forced, their bodies beaten, their faces hidden
from those who really don't want to see them.
But you can see them all, God of the poor. You hear their cry and answer by
opening our eyes, breaking our heart and loosening our tongues to insist: NO MORE.
AMEN!

(Source: Catholic Relief Services)

Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)

**"We must unite our efforts to free victims
and stop this crime that's become more aggressive...
that threatens the foundational values of society."** Pope Francis

Ireland

This past year Ireland hosted an international conference on human trafficking at the Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. The conference focused on awareness raising of Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking and the North Atlantic Maritime Project. As well as partners within Ireland, partners from Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Interpol, Europol, UNODC and International Labour Organization attended and contributed. In 2014 for the first time, a person from the fisheries industry was formally recognized as a victim of human trafficking. In 2015, 78 victims of human trafficking were found in Ireland. There were 17 ongoing prosecutions and a further 12 cases were finalized with convictions recorded for human trafficking type of offenses.



Mairead Fernane, Sr. Katherine Tierney, Fr. Padraig Walsh PP and members of government.

A Kerry-based group, *Kerry Stop Human Trafficking*, has launched a new trilingual information brochure in order to better promote their message across the entire community. *Kerry Stop Human Trafficking* holds awareness days throughout the year, works in conjunction with anti-prostitution campaign 'Turn off the Red Light' and also regularly makes contributions at conferences organized by the Open Door Network and the Kerry Diocese. Sister Katherine Tierney participates in all these anti-trafficking efforts.

United States

Safe Harbor, in collaboration with Bon Secours Richmond Health System, opened a shelter in Richmond, Virginia in January for victims of human trafficking. The location will not be disclosed as part of an effort to protect its residents. The shelter will provide adult female victims of with counseling, safety planning and case management. Forensic nurses with Bon Secours Richmond Health System will supply health care. Cathy Easter, Safe Harbor's executive director and Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS participated in a news conference at Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital during which Safe Harbor and Bon Secours announced the new shelter. (See picture)



The U.S. members of the JPIC committee are sponsoring a three-part film and discussion series this spring called "Eye Openers" in collaboration with the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. Our first film, *Not My Life*, will focus on human trafficking and takes viewers into a world where millions of children are exploited every day through an astonishing array of practices including forced labor, domestic servitude, begging, sex tourism, sexual violence, and child soldiering. Challenging though it may be, *Not My Life's* message is ultimately one of hope. Victims of slavery can be set free and go on to live happy and productive lives.

Bon Secours USA also participated in several advocacy efforts. Sr. Rosie Jasinski, CBS endorsed a letter for Bon Secours USA from the organization ATEST (Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking) urging Congress to support the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act.

In collaboration with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility's Human Trafficking working group, Bon Secours USA endorsed the following:

- Investor letter to Wendy's and Kroger's urging them to become part of the Fair Food Program. At issue here is fair wages and human rights in the supply chain.
- Investor statement on the 3rd Anniversary of the Factory collapse in Bangladesh. This was endorsed by both Bon Secours Health System and Bon Secours USA.

Information on human trafficking is regularly sent to Sisters, Associates and Colleagues by way of email and through the Country Newsletter.

Peru

THE SISTERS IN PERU HAVE RECENTLY CONCLUDED THEIR YEARLY ASSEMBLY WHERE AFTER AN AFTERNOON OF HARD WORK THEY CONFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WORKING ON THE PRIORITY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, A CRITICAL SOCIAL PROBLEM IN OUR COUNTRY. MANY PERSONS, MOSTLY WOMEN, BUT ALSO CHILDREN AND MEN ARE EXPLOITED BY COUNTRY WIDE MAFIAS, ESPECIALLY IN OUR HIGHLANDS AND AMAZONIAN DEPARTMENTS; THEY LURE THEM OFFERING THEM WELL-PAID JOBS.

THEY TAKE THEM TO THE MINING ZONES AND THEN ENSLAVE THEM AFTER TAKING AWAY THEIR DOCUMENTS AND THE MONEY FROM THEIR SEXUAL SERVICES; OF COURSE, THE YOUNGER THE PERSON, THE HIGHEST THE DEMAND.

WE THEREFORE MAINTAIN THAT PREVENTION AND EDUCATION ARE THE FOREMOST PRIORITY.



France

Every community in France received information about the different kinds of human trafficking or slavery and committed to reflect on it together. There have already been some meetings, every person was attentive and had the opportunity to talk about her own personal experiences of meeting unknown persons on the street, something that has been happening way too often. For example: a car goes by and stops to ask you to get in! This requires a great deal of prudence in our travels.

We made the commitment to pray for the victims and for those who exploit them.

International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

- Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Fran Gorsuch, CBS (USA)
- Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ Co-chair
- Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS (Ireland)
- Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS (USA) Chair
- Sr. Noelia Lara Núñez, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Marguerite Provost, CBS (France)
- Sr. Alice Talone, CBS (USA)
- Sr. Katherine Tierney, CBS (Ireland)
- Sr. Yolanda Morales Valiente, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Chris Webb, CBS (USA)