

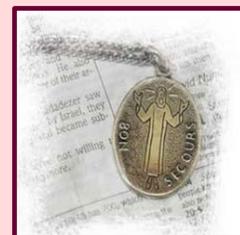
Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours

An Economy without Trafficking



February, 2021
Vol. 6, Number 6



A major driver of human trafficking is neoliberalism. It relentlessly promotes the assumption that creating wealth for businesses and individuals who are already well-off will "trickle down" to those in greatest need.

This month we commemorate the **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking**. Since 2014 the Sisters of Bon Secours have been addressing this social justice issue through their membership in national organizations as well as through membership in Talitha Kum International. Talitha Kum is a global network of Catholic Sisters whose mission is to end human trafficking through collaborative initiatives focused around prevention, protection, advocacy and the rehabilitation of survivors while promoting actions that address the systemic causes of this injustice.

Talitha Kum is currently addressing three systemic causes that give rise to human trafficking. One of those systemic injustices is Neoliberal economics which is the focus of this Newsletter. Since the 2021 theme of the International Human Trafficking Day of Prayer and Awareness is "An Economy Without Human Trafficking", the Talitha Kum Committee has prepared a Study, Prayer and Action Packet focusing on Neoliberalism and Human Trafficking in a Time of COVID-19. Highlights from that resource have been used for this Newsletter. The full packet prepared by Talitha Kum is accompanying this Newsletter for your own prayer, education, study and conversation during this month.

It is hoped that by using these materials we may find creative ways to work together to build an economy based on abundance, communion, inclusion and justice: a beloved community committed to building the kingdom of God as we "cry out against human trafficking".

February
JPIC Days of Remembrance

February 1-7
World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 2
World Wetlands Day

February 8
Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita



February 10
International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking

February 11
World Day of the Sick

February 17
Ash Wednesday

February 20
World Day of Social Justice



Structural Injustices Connected to Human Trafficking

- The power differential between men and women in all sectors of society
- **The dominant model of neo-liberal development and unfettered capitalism**
- Unjust and inadequate immigration law and policy

What is Neoliberalism?

Neoliberal economics has emerged over the last decades as a political and economic ideology that is characterized by free market trade and capitalism, deregulation of financial markets, and the shift towards the privatization of public assets and services. It advocates "casualisation" of the workforce to maximize profit, loosening of regulatory controls, reducing taxes, and the weakening of organized labor. Neoliberalism emphasizes the pursuit of profit and economic growth, holding that private business creates wealth (for individuals) that will trickle down to the community – that private wealth for some is good for everyone.

Source: Talitha Kum International



We denounce this unjust economic model of Neoliberalism that prioritizes profit over human rights, creates a culture of violence and commodification, and decreases funding for necessary social services, putting people at greater risk of being.

Talitha Kum International



What does Neoliberalism have to do with us?

Neoliberal economics have led to changes in the way countries and communities function, not least of all emphasizing individual wealth and national economic growth over community interests:

- Public assets and services, such as education, health and aged care are sold or contracted out and become profit driven businesses;
- Casualisation of the work force leads to job insecurity, unpaid sick leave and reduced or no social protections;
- Aggravated inequalities exist between people and countries. The COVID pandemic has highlighted class, gender, race, age, geographic and economic inequities e.g. for individuals, the ability or not to isolate, access to healthcare, internet/WiFi access, job security, financial security;
- Women are overwhelmingly and disproportionately negatively impacted. Women are the predominate workforce in highly impacted and low paid industries. e.g. health and aged care, hospitality, manufacturing, textiles. The feminization of poverty is increasing;
- There is reliance on "just-in-time" inventories that are heavily dependent on overseas markets. Many countries were therefore unable to provide adequate medical and protective equipment at the start of the pandemic because they were reliant on overseas supplies which were unavailable;
- Increasing national GDP targets are depleting the earth's resources and contributing to a global climate crisis;
- Estimated financial cost to the community of each person trafficked is over €300,000;
- Contrary to the UN aim to "leave no one behind" the gap between rich and poor is widening – currently the world's 26 richest people own more wealth than half the entire world's population (7.8 billion!).

Source: Talitha Kum International Coordination Committee



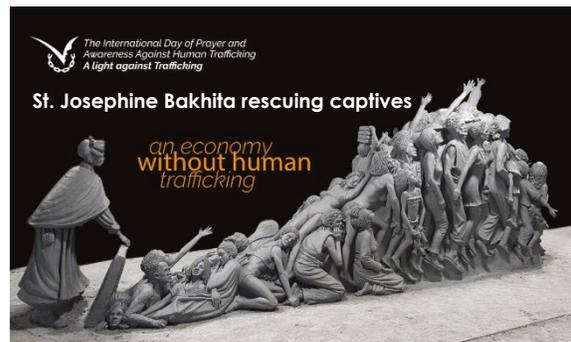
"We commit ourselves to just and sustainable economic practices within our networks. We also commit ourselves to create spaces of interdisciplinary reflection, collaboration and advocacy within the various ecclesial, interfaith, government, and international organizations according to Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching."

Talitha Kum International

Reflection

Pope Francis has implored us to "promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature". If we accept this invitation and open ourselves to living more simply and compassionately, and to challenging our economic and political leaders, our economic models may finally begin to eliminate the differences between privilege and poverty. If we choose not to accept this invitation, the liberation of the oppressed that Jesus calls for in Luke's Gospel will be difficult, if not impossible, to be realized.

What commitment can you make to help "proclaim liberty to those who are held captive" by Neoliberal economics?



Talitha Kum Resources on Human Trafficking

- English:**
<https://www.talithakum.info/en/resources>
- Spanish:**
<https://www.talithakum.info/es/recursos/papelos>
- French:**
<https://www.talithakum.info/fr/ressources/documents>

Prayer

Mary, our Mother, you taught your son Jesus the prophetic values expressed in your Magnificat. Be with us now and stay with us during this perilous time when our world is gripped by fear, division, inequity and exploitation. Open us to healing ourselves and our world by rejecting individualism and consumerism and reclaiming our unity with each other and all of creation.

Give us the grace and insight we need to build an inclusive world community that values human dignity and a global economy where no one is invisible or "thrown away". Give us the courage to insist that basic human needs must be provided for: that the needs of the many take priority over the privileges of the few; that access to meaningful work is available to all.

Guide us to build an economy that moves us in deliberate and meaningful ways toward justice and equality and safeguards the integrity of creation. Help us to create a community of companions who share these values. Enable us to find creative ways to overcome our divisions and work together to build an economy based on abundance, communion, inclusion and justice: a beloved community committed to building the kingdom of God. Amen. Let it be so! St. Josephine Bakhita, pray for us!

International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

- Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS (Peru)
 Eileen Fernandini, Associate (USA)
 Camille Grippion (USA and France Liaison)
 Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ Co-chair
 Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS (Ireland)
 Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS (USA) Chair
 Rachel Moccia, Bon Secours Young Adult
 Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS (Peru)
 Sr. Katherine Tierney, CBS (Ireland)
 Sr. Yolanda Morales Valiente, CBS (Peru)
 Sr. Chris Webb, CBS (USA)