

**International Day of Prayer & Awareness
Against Human Trafficking
8 February**



Pope Francis is an ardent advocate for the needs of the suffering, the poor and those unjustly treated. As a result of his pleas, the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, February 8th, has been set aside as a special day of prayer and awareness for the men, women and children who are horribly impacted by traffickers.

St. Josephine (1869-1947) was kidnapped and sold into slavery at the age of nine, torn from her Sudanese home land, language and customs. She was baptized in 1890 and since she was old enough she became free. Josephine joined the Canossian Daughters of Charity and lived 50 years in religious life. Sr. Josephine's ministry of service gave witness to her gentleness and compassion, especially for the suffering and the poor. She was canonized in 2000.

St. Josephine Bakhita prayer for us!

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, harboring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is the modern form of slavery.

It is estimated that by December 2013, there had been 20.9 million people world wide trafficked. According to UNICEF, 1.2 million children are victims of traffickers.

What might I do during Lent about human trafficking?

- Find out as much as possible about this modern day slavery. Resources are available on line, and in anti-trafficking groups. Check out your diocesan sites for information.
- Pray for all who are vulnerable to become victims of human trafficking and for all who are presently bound in slavery.
- Contact your local government and church agencies for what is being done.
- How can I connect this Lent in prayer and activities with my sisters and brothers whose lives have been shattered through slavery? What might the Holy Spirit be leading me to do?

“God of life, strengthen those whose hearts have been broken and lives have been uprooted. Give us the light, grace and courage to work with you so that we can participate in the goodness of creation. Fill us with the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with the victims so that we may all enjoy the freedoms and rights which have their source in your son, Jesus Christ.” (Prayer adapted from Sr. Genevieve Cassani)

