

# WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

# PRAYER GUIDE

"IF WE CLOSE OUR EYES AND EARS, WE WILL BE ACCOMPLICES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING"  
POPE FRANCIS



SONG: [HOLD ONTO HOPE \(KATHY SHERMAN\)](#)

The **World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking** is an opportunity for us to come together in solidarity and reflection on the harsh reality faced by millions of people worldwide (more than 40M in 2022-last OIM survey) due to exploitation and abuse.

Through prayer, we can ask for their liberation, healing, and dignity, and also commit ourselves to being an active voice against this injustice. Every prayer and action, no matter how small, has the power to transform lives and contribute to a more fair future. Today, more than ever, we need to remind ourselves that we all have a responsibility to fight for the freedom and dignity of every human being.

## WORD OF GOD

### ISAIAH 58:6

"IS NOT THIS THE KIND OF FASTING I HAVE CHOSEN: TO LOSE THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE AND UNTIE THE CORDS OF THE YOKE, TO SET THE OPPRESSED FREE AND BREAK EVERY YOKE?"

*This verse reminds us of the call to fight against oppression, to set free those who are bound, and to seek justice for the vulnerable. It's an invitation to act and bring justice for those who suffer.*

### LUKE 4:18-19

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT FOR THE BLIND, TO SET THE OPPRESSED FREE, TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR."

*These words of Jesus remind us that He came to free the oppressed and the captives. He invites us to follow His example and fight for the freedom of those who suffer from human trafficking.*

## REFLECTION - SHARING

*What does the Gospel or the phrase of Pope Francis: "If we close our eyes and ears, we will be accomplices of human trafficking" inspire in us?*

*How can we walk with those who suffer, bringing hope and advocacy to our communities?*

*What actions can we take to address the intertwined challenges of trafficking, climate injustice, and forced migration?*

*How can we become true pilgrims of hope, making each step a testament to justice and solidarity?*

In this Jubilee year, may we feel empowered to take steps that affirm the dignity of every human being and support the renewal of creation and community.

## STORIES FROM EACH CONTINENT: WITNESSES OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE

### Asia

Malyn was a survivor of labor trafficking. She was badly disfigured due to physical abuse and torture. She lost confidence in herself and stayed away from people around her. With time, patience, and encouragement, Malyn began to come out of her shell. She started to interact and make friends. One day, I asked her whether she would like to help other women by allowing me to share her story. She gave an adamant "yes!" with a big smile. This smile of hope lighted up her face. Since then, she had plucked up her courage and touched other lives by advocating for justice.

***Let us pause: In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'holds hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.***

### Oceania

Rani, is a 17-year-old student from a high school in Melbourne, Australia. When her parents informed her that they were taking her overseas to marry a man she had never met, Rani felt she had no choice but to comply and thought her fate was sealed.

An Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH) member visited her school and delivered a presentation where Rani learned that forced marriage is illegal in Australia and, that she had the right to choose her own husband. Empowered by this timely information, Rani realised she had an option she never knew existed and could act to shape her own future.

***Let us pause: In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'holds hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.***

### North America

Aisha, a woman from North Africa, left her family to work as a maid in the Middle East, hoping to send money to her family and her daughter, whom she raised alone after her husband's abandonment. Working for a wealthy family, she endured long hours of work without receiving a salary. She faced endless hours of work, mistreatment from the children, and constant reproaches from the parents. When her employer's family flew in their private jet to Los Angeles, she seized the opportunity to escape and sought help from the police. After a year in a center run by nuns, she improved her English, learned to drive, and found a stable job. She eventually obtained a green card and brought her daughter to the United States after eight years of separation. Aisha became an American citizen, working hard to make ends meet. She is grateful to the nuns who supported her and continues to build a new life while staying connected to her family and friends, both Muslim and Christian.

***In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'holds hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.***

### Europe

The story of Leyla is shared: I am a mother of three, aged 10 to 14, and wife to a bus driver. We met at our local church here in Ireland, though both of us were born in Nigeria. Life seems idyllic now, but it hasn't always been this way. I was deceived into coming to Ireland with the promise of a better education. Instead, I was trafficked for sexual exploitation. For six months, I was held captive, repeatedly abused. My escape came when my captor carelessly left the keys within reach. After a long recovery journey, I rebuilt my life. I am now a healthcare assistant, striving for a better future for my family. Yet, I carry the scars. My body remembers the trauma. Still, I've gained a gift: the ability to recognize and support other trafficked women. I've survived, and I am now a helper and advocate for my sisters.

***Let us pause: In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'holds hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.***

### Africa

My name is Samira, and this is my story. I became a mother at a very young age and was left alone to care for my baby. Desperate to give my daughter a better future, I made the difficult decision to embark on a perilous journey to Tunisia. Like many women on the boat, I carried my newborn in my arms, trusting that our children would bring us protection and blessings. When we arrived, we were met with aid and care. It wasn't easy, but we were no longer alone. In Tunisia, I found support from the Talitha Kum sisters and brothers, who helped me rebuild my life. They trained me to work in agriculture, and I started a small goat and sheep business. Today, I am happily married with two children. I'm forever grateful to Talitha Kum for helping me start anew with dignity and hope.

***Let us pause: In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'hold hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.***

## South America

A story of Maria is shared: I am a mother and a survivor of human trafficking. Twenty years ago, I was blessed to meet the sisters who helped me find my salvation. It was a long and difficult road because changing is painful and hurts a lot, and to get away from situations of prostitution, drugs and violence is almost impossible to achieve alone. However, everything changed when I was met with words of encouragement, eyes of compassion and caring gestures which allowed me to find and believe in Jesus. He gave me the ability to believe in myself, to love my life and to be grateful for the opportunity I have to still be alive. These were the seeds of hope, which continue to bear fruit. Today I am a woman who strives and fights for the rights of all women, for those who have no voice and for those who are no longer with us. To them I always say: Never lose hope and ask Jesus, "Father, please never allow me to go back."

**Let us pause in silence: In our silence and using our imagination, we take the hands of those mentioned in the story and offer our love, gratitude and hope – we commit to 'holds hands' as we all journey towards justice and freedom for all.**

## SYMBOLIC GESTURE - STEPS OF COMMITMENT

---

Each person is now invited to make a commitment—a step forward in solidarity. This step can be symbolic, perhaps by writing a short prayer, message, or action pledge on a small footprint cut-out, or simply place a small stone on the path. These steps, when placed together, will create a communal path, a trail that represents our unified commitment to justice and healing. As we walk along this path, we remember that pilgrimage is more than a journey—it is a sacred commitment to transformation. Each step we take is an act of compassion, echoing God's call to walk alongside the oppressed, the vulnerable, and the displaced. Each footprint we follow symbolizes a step toward justice, dignity, and hope.

---

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

---



**Lord God,**

**We pray for all the victims of human trafficking, that they may find comfort, freedom, and a future filled with peace.**

**We ask you to open our hearts to the injustice that so many people, created in Your image and likeness just like us, are suffering today through slavery and exploitation.**

**Grant us the courage to raise our voices for those who cannot speak, to see those who are invisible, and to act with compassion and justice.**

**May Your love inspire us to fight for the dignity, freedom, and rights of every person, without distinction. We pray for all those trapped in trafficking, that they may find the strength to be freed and the help they need.**

**May justice be done, and may all live in the freedom You have given us.**

**Guide our steps to be instruments of change, love, and hope in a world where injustice still prevails. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.**

---

**"Saint Bakhita shows us the way of transformation. Her life tells us that change is possible when we let ourselves be transformed by God who cares. It is the care of mercy, the care of love, that changes us deeply and makes us able to welcome others as brothers and sisters. Recognizing the dignity of every person is the first act of care.**

The Jubilee emphasizes HOPE through concrete actions such as addressing global issues like the horrific global reality of human trafficking. We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision." - Pope Francis

THIS PRAYER GUIDE IS INSPIRED BY RESOURCES FROM: [HTTPS://PREGHIERACONTROTRATTA.ORG/](https://preghieracontrotratta.org/) AND [HTTPS://WWW.TALITHAKUM](https://www.talithakum)