

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING



XII EDITION THE INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING –
FEBRUARY 8, 2026



Photo: Lisa Kristine

VIGIL OF PRAYER

Peace Begins with Dignity: A Global Call to End Human Trafficking

***"Peace be with you all! It is the peace of the Risen Christ
— unarmed, disarming, humble, and persevering.
A peace rooted in God's unconditional love."***

— Pope Leo XIV, 8 May 2025

INTRODUCTION

Leader:

Peace and dignity are inseparable. "True peace is not just the absence of war but the presence of justice¹", compassion, and respect for every human life. Where dignity is violated—through exploitation, trafficking, poverty, or displacement—peace is broken. When dignity is upheld, peace is restored.

On this feast of **Saint Josephine Bakhita**, once she was enslaved yet now a beacon of hope, we gather as a global community. From every continent and tradition, we unite in prayer, affirming that ending human trafficking is both a moral and spiritual call.

PROCESSION OF SYMBOLS

*Five young people, representing continents or regions, carry candles to the altar. Each candle represents a vulnerable group, a core value, and our shared commitment to **protect human dignity**.*

- **Candle of Peace** – for women and girls whose dignity is wounded.
Christian prayer: "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9)
- **Candle of Faith** – for survivors whose resilience inspires transformation.
Muslim prayer: "Indeed, with hardship comes ease." (Surah Ash-Sharh 94:6)
- **Candle of Love** – for children whose innocence has been taken away.
Hindu prayer: "May all beings be happy and free from suffering." (Visuddhimagga 9.8)
- **Candle of Justice** – for all seeking freedom and justice.
Jewish prayer: "Justice, justice you shall pursue." (Deuteronomy 16:20)
- **Candle of Hope** – for migrants, refugees, and displaced peoples.
Buddhist reflection: "Hope is a seed of awakening; from compassion grows the path to freedom."

¹ Emily Greene Balch, winner of the 1946 Nobel Peace Prize.

All together:

Dignity is the flame that no darkness can extinguish.
Peace begins when dignity is honoured.

Song: Short reflective hymn

TESTIMONY (Optional)

REFLECTIONS AND INTERFAITH PRAYERS

- **Candle of Peace – Africa**

"I am **Peace**, but my flame sparks in a world of war and division."

Prayer: God of compassion, protect those trapped by trafficking. Grant courage to the vulnerable, wisdom to leaders, and hearts open to justice. Through St. Josephine Bakhita, may freedom flourish. Amen.

- **Candle of Faith – Europe**

"I am **Faith**, often questioned, yet I never fully die."

Prayer: God of justice and peace, strengthen efforts against trafficking and awaken hearts to protect life and dignity. Through St. Josephine Bakhita, may Europe be a place of safety and hope. Amen.

- **Candle of Love – Americas**

"I am **Love**, dimmed by indifference, yet I continue to shine."

Prayer: God of life, protect the exploited and abused, strengthen solidarity, and inspire justice. Through St. Josephine Bakhita, may all hearts find freedom and care. Amen.

- **Candle of Justice – Asia**

"I am **Justice**, weakened under oppression, yet I long to shine."

Prayer: God of freedom, restore dignity to survivors, raise leaders for justice, and protect the vulnerable. Through St. Josephine Bakhita, may Asia shine with peace. Amen.

- **Candle of Hope – Oceania**

"I am **Hope**. While I burn, all other candles can shine again."

Prayer: Creator God, bless trafficked and displaced persons, strengthen communities, and inspire care for every life. Through St. Josephine Bakhita, may hope and justice prevail. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God, you came “to set the captives free.” (Luke 4:14-21)

We pray for all victims and survivors of trafficking, wars, and conflicts, who have endured suffering yet continue to show courage and resilience.

Grant them peace in their hearts and restore their dignity, wounded by violence and injustice. Inspire leaders and communities to act with courage against exploitation, war, and every form of oppression.

Touch the hearts of those who harm others, guiding them toward justice, reconciliation, and compassion, so that all may live in freedom, respect, and lasting peace.

May people everywhere join hands to build a world where peace begins with dignity for all.

Amen.

Gesture of Unity – Participants light candles, sharing the vibration of love, hope, peace, faith, and justice.

Leader:

Let us hold on to love, hope, peace, faith, and justice in our daily mission.

SENDING FORTH BLESSINGS

With the candle lifted high, turn to face each direction, offering light and blessing.

SOUTH: *May peace, justice, love, and hope embrace every heart.*

EAST: *May they rise in brilliance and shine upon the earth.*

WEST: *May they rest in fullness and bless every land.*

NORTH: *May they flow in spirit and circle everywhere.*

All together:

May peace, justice, love, and hope circle the whole earth, now and forever.
Amen.

SYMBOLIC SEND-OFF – DISTRIBUTION OF SYMBOLS (optional)

Concluding Song: “Carry your candle, light up the world.”