

Racial Justice Sunday

11 September 2011

Love your neighbour
as yourself, do this
and you will live
Luke 10:27-28

PEOPLE
SHOULDN'T BE
BOUGHT
& SOLD

NINE
TO FIVE?
480 PEOPLE WILL BE
TRAFFICKED TODAY
WORLDWIDE WHILE
YOU'RE AT WORK

Created by God, treated like slaves:
Tackling human trafficking

ONE RACE • THE HUMAN RACE
carj
Catholic Association for Racial Justice

churches
together
IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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11 September 2011

**Created by God, treated like slaves:
Tackling human trafficking**

'Love your neighbour as yourself, do this and you will live'

Luke. 10:27-28

Every year Racial Justice Sunday provides Christian communities throughout Britain and Ireland with an opportunity to come together to pray for an end to racism and injustice. Thousands of churches, schools, groups and individuals mobilise their resources to find a practical response to a single theme. The poignant theme for Racial Justice Sunday 2011 is ***Created by God: Treated like slaves: Tackling human trafficking.***

Trafficking in human beings is a form of modern-day slavery and is a violation of human dignity and human rights. It is one of the biggest challenges that we, as a Christian community, must address and denounce.

Our motivation to respond to this injustice is rooted in the scriptures. '*God created man in His image; in the divine image God created him; male and female God created them.*' As Christians we are challenged to make our response a fundamental part of our discipleship and to act upon this by raising compassion, awareness and understanding for those who are suffering.

The UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2000)

defines human trafficking as follows:

Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

The **International Labour Organisation** estimates that there are at least 12.3 million women, men and children in forced labour, bonded labour, and commercial sexual servitude at any given time. Of these 2.4 million were trafficked and are dehumanised, exploited and marginalised. As Christians we are called upon to do whatever it takes to bring about justice for those who need it.

In terms of the regional distribution of the 2.4 million trafficked people, there are 1,360,000 in Asia and the Pacific, 270,000 in Industrialised countries including Europe, 250,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 230,000 in the Middle-East and North Africa, 200,000 in Transition countries and 130,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Human trafficking profits are estimated between \$7-12 billion (U.S. dollars) a year, making it the third most profitable criminal activity after the illegal trade of arms and drugs.

The Racial Justice Sunday pack consists of different sections which can be used together or in separate sections as an information resource. They offer guidance, prayers, reflections and ideas for action. They can be used for liturgies, joint reflection, sharing experiences and developing projects and campaigns. We hope that you will find the material informative and useful.

A Background to Human Trafficking



The scope of human trafficking

Human Trafficking¹ includes a range of human rights abuses, such as labour exploitation, commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging and the theft of organs. What they all have in common, however, is a blatant disregard for the human person, regarded as a commodity that can be bought and sold. Often referred to as the modern form of slavery, trafficking dehumanises and demeans those caught up in its exploitative web. Trafficking is a crime that exploits the vulnerability and insecurity of those who find themselves without access to basic rights such as education or employment. Most often targeted are people who are victims of violence, either in the home or

as a result of armed conflict, as well as those who are unable to provide for their families in their own country and are prevented by legal barriers from emigrating and accessing employment in another state. Trafficking is the third most profitable international criminal activity after the global trade in illegal arms and drugs. This crime is all the more serious because its hidden nature frequently allows the traffickers to operate undetected and with impunity.

Extent of human trafficking

The trafficking of women and girls for commercial sexual exploitation is no longer confined to major cities but is now spreading throughout towns, villages and rural areas in the UK and Ireland. The consequences are devastating not only for the individuals concerned and their loved ones, but also for the communities in which this hideous crime takes place. As individual Christians, members of Christian churches and communities and as Citizens, urgent action must be taken to ensure that

- the victims receive the help and support they need
- those responsible are successfully prosecuted
- measures are put in place to prevent women and girls being subject to this type of exploitation.

As a result of the hidden nature of this crime, it is difficult to assess the number of victims with any certainty. A briefing² in February 2011 to Members of the European Parliament highlighted that about 100,000 people are trafficked into and within the EU annually. Globally, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 2.4 million people have been trafficked and of these 1.39 million individuals are victims of sexual exploitation. The majority of those trafficked are women and girls, and it is estimated that 1.2 million victims are minors (under 18). We should also note that these figures do not include people trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation within the borders of their own country.

A support group working directly with trafficked people in UK believes that hundreds of men, women and children are trafficked there each year. Research carried out for the Home Office in recent years estimated that the number of women trafficked into the UK was between 4,000 and 10,000.³ An organization which supports trafficked persons reveals that in a period of 3 years *in one region of England alone... over 100 families have been*

*devastated by what has happened to their daughter, adding that 'We believe that these figures are indicative of a far bigger problem.'*⁴ Scottish Government Social Research published in 2009⁵ notes that some 79 individuals believed to be victims of trafficking came into contact with agencies in Scotland in the year up to March 2008. While these were mainly women trafficked for sexual exploitation, there were small numbers of both women and men trafficked for labour exploitation. A 2009 report from the Immigrant Council of Ireland identified 102 female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Ireland who had received assistance. The same report found that *there is a minimum of 1,000 women in indoor prostitution in Ireland at any one time... of whom up to 97% are migrant women.*⁶

It is often difficult to detect a victim of trafficking. Victims of sexual exploitation often believe they are travelling to take up employment and consequently trust the people accompanying them on their journey, who may well be known to them personally. By the time the reality of their situation becomes clear to them, they are often already hidden from sight and frequently subject to violence. Worse still, is the uncertainty and fear of what awaits themselves and their families in their home country if they do not meet the traffickers' demands. Having taken their identification documents, the traffickers threaten to hand them over to the immigration authorities if they do not comply.

For migrant workers, refusal by employers to renew work permits frequently results in employees, who entered the country legally, finding themselves in an irregular situation. Many persons trafficked to UK or Ireland have little or no English language skills, limited if any awareness of their rights and deficient, if any, knowledge of how to access information or contact support organisations that might assist them.

The victims of modern slavery have many faces. They are men and women, adults and children. Yet, all are denied basic human dignity and freedom.⁷

You are the people of God; God loved you and chose you for his own.⁸

Trafficking is not a migration issue

While it is difficult to quantify accurately the numbers of victims of trafficking, this difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that trafficking is frequently wrongly classified as a migration issue, rather than one of organised crime. A consequence of this is that when they seek help, victims are often re-victimised by being treated as ‘illegal’ immigrants, compounding the traumatic experiences they have already undergone. Many are returned to their home country, to the situation from which, in the first place, they were fleeing, and where they may have to face their traffickers’ demands for money supposedly owed to them. So it is not only legislation directly relating to trafficking that needs to be addressed but also immigration laws. The barriers that prevent migrants from legally entering the UK and Ireland for work are a significant contributory factor to the problem of trafficking. Faced with no possibility to provide for themselves or their families in their home countries, many people feel they have no option but to attempt to enter irregularly in order to access employment, often having no choice but to put themselves at the mercy of traffickers.

The Christian Churches, with their far-reaching networks, nationally and internationally, Church institutions such as schools, for example, and individual Christians therefore have a key role to play in advocating and lobbying for comprehensive, just and transparent policies, procedures and practices which safeguard migrants’ rights. Also in compiling and disseminating accurate, reliable information in order to refute the many myths which exist in relation to immigration and trafficking to ensure that it is the traffickers, and not the trafficked persons, who are identified as guilty of criminal offences.

Christian Churches and their far-reaching networks, nationally and internationally, can play a vital role in lobbying for just legislation and in raising awareness of the human rights of all people which is rooted in their dignity as images of God.

The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights.⁹

Addressing the issue of demand

Human dignity is the source of the rights of each human person. The Christian understanding of the human person underlies and defines the respect which should characterise all relationships between people. Churches have a particular role to play in underlining the dignity of each woman, man and child, made in the image of God, and therefore fundamentally equal. *See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children – and so, in fact, we are.*¹⁰ Jesus Christ, in his words and in the ways he related to each and every person, shows us what respect means in practice, in daily life. The demand fuelling the market that drives the crime of human trafficking is an area that requires particular attention. The mentality that views human beings as a commodity that can be bought and sold has no place in society and needs to be challenged. In the case of women and girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the underlying attitudes that lead some men to believe that they have the right to 'purchase' another human being for their own gratification needs to be addressed within society through education and programmes. Churches need to promote a fuller understanding of the Christian and civic duty to advocate for legislation which addresses the issue of demand. The UK and Ireland are currently discussing legislation that will include punishment for purchasing sex from controlled persons, including women who are under the constraints of pimps and traffickers. One practical initiative in this regard is an ongoing and concerted effort by the Churches and church groups to educate people in a proper understanding of sexuality, countering the exploitative approach often promoted in the media and popular culture. In this regard, Church schools and religious education programmes have a particular responsibility and opportunity - in relation to young people. Likewise, adult faith formation initiatives at parish level, as well as homilies/sermons which form part of the Churches' regular worship/liturgy can open up new understandings by presenting human sexuality from a genuinely Christian perspective.

Protecting Human Dignity and Human Rights

There is a clear need for legislation in the area of human trafficking to reflect a societal commitment to the defence of human rights. However, the obligation to defend human dignity does not stop at the borders of our own land. Committed to bringing about the Reign of God, we have a responsibility to contribute to long-term measures aimed at addressing the problem of human trafficking on a global scale. This includes not only ensuring appropriate legislation and international cooperation leading to the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of these abuses. Initiatives that tackle the root causes of this problem are essential, root causes that extend far beyond the borders of Ireland and Britain. In this context, current cutbacks in Overseas Development Aid are a serious cause of concern. International programmes that support economic development, promote employment and peace-building and educational programmes that address attitudes that contribute to violence against women and gender discrimination in general make a significant contribution to the prevention of trafficking. Here, the Church, inspired and empowered by Jesus Christ and through its global presence and outreach, has a unique resource which enables it to advocate, network and support efforts internationally to address trafficking in source, transit and destination countries.

Our vision is that of a world in which all persons are respected, valued and given the dignity which is theirs by right, a world where no one seeks to exploit or enslave another for the purposes of sexual gratification or financial gain.¹¹

...you are the chosen race, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into God's own marvellous light. At one time you were not God's people, but now you are God's people...¹²

¹ "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, [The Palermo Protocol], Art 3, par (a))
Child Trafficking - involves a minor (under the age of eighteen years) in the context of "Trafficking in persons" as defined above.

Not to be confused with trafficking, *Smuggling of persons* is the procurement of the illegal entry of a person into a State of which that person is not a national or a legal resident. While some direct or indirect financial or other material reward may be involved, smuggling, contrary to trafficking, does not include elements of exploitation, coercion or violation of human rights. (cf Art 3 (a), *UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, 2000*)

² Immigrant Council of Ireland Chief Executive Officer, Denise Charlton, briefing on the Dignity Project, a transnational, EU-funded project which looked at best

practice in service provision for victims of sex trafficking. cf ICI News Bulletin, Issue 82 - February 17, 2011, www.immigrantcouncil.ie

³ Quoted in www.medaille.co.uk Medaille Trust.

⁴ www.chaste.org.uk CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe)

⁵ www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch Human Trafficking in Scotland 2008/09

⁶ www.immigrantcouncil.ie Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: The Experiences of Migrant, 2009

⁷ www.america.gov/st/texttrans President Obama, quoted in *Trafficking in Persons: Ten Years of Partnering to Combat Modern Slavery*, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs June 14, 2010

⁸ Col 3.12

⁹ Pope John Paul II, Letter to the International Conference *Twenty-first century slavery – the human rights dimension to trafficking in human persons*, 15 May 2002

¹⁰ 1 Jn.3.1

¹¹ www.apireland.ie Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) Vision Statement – associated with Irish Missionary Union and Conference of Religious in Ireland

¹² 1 Pet 2. 9,10

(This background section on *Human Trafficking* draws extensively on the statement, *Protecting Women from the Violence of Trafficking*, issued by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Commission for Justice and Social Affairs on *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 25 November 2009; www.catholicbishops.ie)

Biblical Reflection



Whose side are you on? Justice, Forgiveness & Grace

There are many sisters and brothers still groaning under the weight of oppression. Human trafficking, where men, women and children are exploited as commodities for sale, pleasure and exploitation, is an affront to God's vision in Christ for flourishing and abundant lives for all.

We belong to God who is just, desires fullness of life for all and who delivers the powerless from their oppressors. But this God, who also a graceful God,

calls us to be channels of grace to one another. While we may rightly seek redress from those who practice oppression and injustice, God's grace also calls us to recognize that we are all in need of grace and forgiveness. We may not love the actions of oppressors and those who seek to restrict and inhibit the full flourishing (as in the case of heartless human traffickers) of all and those who consider others as inferior human beings to themselves. God, in Divine Love, however yearns to create a community of shalom and healthy relationships. The liberating God who hates oppression is ultimately the extravagant Loving God who strives after healing and justice for persons and nations.

While our human penchant is for justice, and rightly so, the appointed readings for this Racial Justice Sunday 2011 challenges all our attempts to assume too high moral grounds, by pointing to the interplay of grace and justice in the affairs of persons and nations. The readings underscore this point: the *Exodus* readings celebrate the liberation of the Hebrews from their Egyptian oppressors - located also in liberating poetics of Psalm 114 the gospel reading (Matthew 18:21-35) layered with meanings and caveats uncovers the complex nature of forgiveness. And the *Romans* text (chapter 14) hints more at our contemporary world with Paul highlighting the diverse forms of 'life together' in practice within the emerging Christian community of his time. Diversity is a call to appreciation and understanding, rather than judgment. For so very often the oppressed also have strange and contradictory ways of re-inscribing oppressive practices. There is no justice without grace and vice versa.

Revised Common Lectionary Readings

Exodus 14: 19-31

God sides with the Oppressed - Whose side are you on?

In the nick of time, God comes through to save God's people (bodies in bondage in a foreign land)

Reflect on the following: To the degree that we are the oppressors, eager to profit from the labour/exploitation of others, God throws us into panic (Exodus 14:24) and leaves us spiritually dead on the seashore (Exodus 14:30).

literally making 'a way when there was no way' for the people to cross the sea, and then lets loose the waters to destroy the advancing military force of the oppressor. One can imagine that with the appearance of the pursuing army, a sense of fear

may have overtaken the Hebrews and under such circumstances it would be easy to complain and want to turn back. Hence, Moses' reminder

What insights can we glean from this story to help us counter the trafficking of human beings?

that rescue is inevitable as God is in the thick of things. With this story retold over the many years after deliverance, the message with all its additions over the years of oral transmission is clear: God who delivers/saves is committed to act on behalf of all who are exploited. One of the dangers for contemporary readers is the tendency to want to identify too readily with the powerless forgetting that many of us are more part the empire of the powerful. In a world of those who have-too-much and those who have-not-enough, we are not in a position to identify clearly and openly with the powerless and marginalised, when too often we are part and parcel of the world of the powerful (consciously or unconsciously). Perhaps, the crossing of the Red Sea is a cautionary metaphor to us all that God does not sanction any state of affairs in which the trafficking and exploitation of human beings exists and thrives, both in powerless and powerful contexts.

Psalm 114

The Poetics of our Liberating God

Psalm 114 reaches right back to the Exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt and the journey to the Promised Land. The psalm speaks of God's inimitable presence. As the mountains leapt and the sea fled at the pure touch of God's hand, his breath breathing over the earth, the people must have been totally and irrevocably aghast. Universally a hymn, this psalm is quite unlike the vast majority of psalms which speak about personal or

In the context of human trafficking consider writing a psalm of deliverance in keeping with a God who frees.

communal lament, grief, joy, thanksgiving and praise. But it is incredibly fluent and graphically poetic in locating for today's reader the glorious works of God in history. Sung, chanted or read this psalm is fundamentally

about connecting place and people with meaning and hope. Here are some abiding and powerful images that connect history, deliverance, and the saving presence and acts of God in a poetics of resistance and praise. Thus, when Israel sings this song (or anyone for that matter) they ought to be reminded of the need to live as evident witnesses to God's liberating power.

Roman Catholic Lectionary Readings

Sirach 27:30-28: 7

Forgiveness at the heart of Faith and Faithfulness

This book (also known as the Book of Wisdom), written by Jesus ben Sirach (around 180 BC) was a text for the education of wealthy young men in Jerusalem just before the Hasmonean revolution (167-164 B.C.). There were tensions in the city: the rifts between rich and

poor, between the local populace and their foreign rulers, between male and female. Hence, the concern: how does a righteous Jew live in such a culture of tension? Maintaining friendships and relationships would have been difficult in this environment. While the temptation to 'sell out' a friend for gain may have been great, the repercussions would have been even greater. Slandering, for instance, injured the victim, the one who slanders, as well as all those who believed the lie. How does one repair the damage caused by such acts? Sirach's answer points to forgiveness. This habit and way of living heals hearts and egos, restores relationships and brings peace. To build the beloved and just society we all dream of, forgiveness is an indispensable part of the foundation. Human tendencies, however, make us more prone to nurse, anger and hatred. The words we have most difficulty in readily uttering are: 'I am sorry' or 'I forgive you'. Jesus Ben Sirach's plea to his contemporaries and reiterated by many others down the ages is that to forgive others is the first step in realising the expansive generosity of God's forgiveness.

Share your thoughts on the following comment: The words we have most difficulty in readily uttering are: 'I am sorry' or 'I forgive you'.

Explore forgiveness from the perspective of a victim of trafficking?

Psalm 103: 1-4; 9.12

Poetics of Justice – Blessing God

Attributed to David, this psalm is a timely reminder of the abundance of God's blessings, most of which may be taken for granted, and the need to remember this. Forgetting God who blesses us with a lifetime of good things and whose generosity is grounded on steadfast love and mercy, may be a reason why humans become locked in a vicious cycle of oppressive habits. The psalm abounds with creation images and points to God who forgives (v3), heals (v3), redeems (v4), satisfies (v5), vindicates (v6), and who is merciful and gracious (v8) to humankind. An underlying theme here is the expansive nature of God's goodness and embrace which ex-

udes blessings! Eugene Peterson in *The Message* (translation of Psalm 103) puts it beautifully: 'God is sheer mercy and grace.... rich in love.' There is, however, a desire of God – that mortal humans will *keep* their covenanted relationship with the Divine Love, by *doing* God's commands.

Reflect on the following: How are our lives a blessing to the God of mercy, grace and love?

In contexts of so many oppressive practices, inequalities and a pervasive atheism, how do we live in the light of Psalm 103?

Other Readings

Romans 14:1-12

Weak or Strong: Act hospitably and not judgemental

Perhaps, it is time to re-read Paul's play on his two categories of Christians: the 'weak in faith' whose tendency is to get too engrossed with details and unnecessary practices and the *strong* who in their focus on God's purposes may just be tempted to think that they have the purpose of their Christian life all sorted out. There are words for both groups from Paul. Lest they are tempted to become arrogant in their own wisdom and the rightness of their purpose, the reminder to the 'strong' is that they should refrain from causing others to lose their faith; and not let their ideas and practices, however good, be misconstrued as evil. Rather they are to 'pursue what makes for peace and for mutual building-up'. It is through living in a manner consistent with one's conscience that one achieves a right relationship with God. One's actions must be founded in faith. The 'weak' are to be welcomed as full members of the community, as it is God who has welcomed them. In the end *all* are answerable to God and living and dying for God in Christ means God in Christ has the final say – not the strong nor the weak. Perhaps, one can reasonably sense the post-modern in Paul in his hint that since both sides are living their faith 'for the Lord' then both positions are valid and should be respected. Is Paul saying that I have to curtail my freedoms because of others' sensitivities? Indeed, like Christ, we are not living for ourselves. We are here to live for the Lord. It is not for us to judge other people. If they can perform their activities in good conscience for the Lord, then we can let them continue.

This parable is laced with multiple possibilities and caveats. If genuine forgiveness is as Jesus said: ‘not seven times but seventy-seven times’ then one can reasonably contend that it is not only the servant who did not forgive: the king also failed to forgive repeatedly and took back the forgiveness already offered when the slave failed to forgive just once. Matthew, of course, writes off the slave as wicked and unforgiving and deserving only to be handed over to be tortured until he could pay off his

What connections can we make between the acts of the king to the indebted slave and rich countries and their relationship to the poor countries indebted to them? How is God represented in this narrative? Is it a just representation? Can you connect with such a view? Consider the consequences of not forgiving. Is it more difficult to extend or to receive forgiveness?

debt. He then goes on to have Jesus saying to his disciples and to us: ‘So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’ There must be countless of these ‘torture sites’ with long queues of defaulted debtors. The master or king may appear to be some kind and benevolent Father - willing to lend sums of money to his slaves to invest. The fact is,

however, is that it was still his property—as was the slave or the more palatable translation of servant. If he is so kind why did the Master want to sell off this slave, his family and the little they had to pay off the slave’s debt? Why did he hand the slave over to be tortured until he got back his money? If the slave could not pay up then the torture can only mean his eventual death and his family being sold to pay back the king. It is the master/king who has the *power*. The master decision is calculated self-interest. The slave or servant pays either way: with money and/or life. But should this excuse the fact that having been forgiven the servant then proceeded to act cruelly to another servant? Psychologists would suggest that out of desperation the servant/slave internalised and mirrored the very thing that eclipsed his own life as property: dispensable at the whim of the master. As Christians we are expected to forgive.

And what can be more fitting than this image of debt to point out how costly forgiveness is. When someone is indebted to you - you have power over that person and to forgive is to give up that power. The problem here is whether the master or king had really given up power. Was forgiveness

genuine - from the heart? Perhaps Jesus is doing a trick with the text to confound a wicked system and such evil with its own chains. By mimicry and mockery Jesus reveals the inconsistency in the world around him and subverts it. That is why he comes as a slave or servant. No wonder Jesus, whose body was brutalised and left hanging on the cross, knows our pains and loves us. Nothing can conquer such power of love. Liberation from indebtedness must mean the liberation of others. Maybe we need to be more thoughtful when it comes to the practice of forgiveness. Perhaps forgiveness, if it comes at all, comes at the end of a process, not at its beginning. Too often, the burden is misplaced. Again, the message of the parable shatters the hubris of those who believe they have a special relationship with God (that their sins are worthy of forgiveness while those of others are not) and act in a manner that mistakenly enforces that belief (that I will condemn you despite my own need for forgiveness).

- **Can we (and should we), move from an ethic of personal forgiveness to forgiveness of foreign policies?**
- **What are the 'sticking points' in extending and receiving forgiveness especially in the context of the evil practice of trafficking human beings?**

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMON/HOMILY



Sermon/Homily suggestion 1

On 4th March 2011, the Irish Times reported a case involving two Scots setting up brothels in Belfast, and forcing trafficked women to work there. Although arrested in Northern Ireland, the two were to be prosecuted in Scotland. Witnesses had to be put into protection schemes - they will be giving evidence against dangerous and violent people.

The themes that run through our lectionary readings are those of liberation and release, judgement and forgiveness - and it is not always easy to put these themes in touch with a story like this, a story of exploitation and brutality, greed and oppression, not in some faraway place, but disturbingly close to home.

Our bible readings cover the route of the people of Israel into slavery in Egypt, and their route out, through the liberation of Exodus. Joseph has been sold by brothers who seek to be rid of a pest; family feuds lead into economic opportunity - or so it seems. It was probably not uncommon to

gain some money by selling off excess children to those who could pay a price; and it is not uncommon now. The fact that Joseph eventually does well in Egypt can take our attention away from the enormity of how he got there, and we can sometimes not notice, conveniently for our consciences, the enormity of the trade in people that still goes on - disturbingly close to home.

In Genesis 50 we find Joseph's brothers, those who had trafficked Joseph into Egypt, worrying that, now that their father was dead, their sins were about to find them out. They go to Joseph, begging his forgiveness, offering to be his slaves to atone for their previous actions, the crime that sent him to Egypt. They imagine for themselves a future of prison or worse. But Joseph forgives them, and refuses to repay them in kind for the way they had treated him. Would he have done that if they were not his brothers, his own flesh and blood? Would he have done that if things had not, in the end, worked out well for him in Egypt? And do we read this passage while putting ourselves in the place of Joseph? Might it be that our real place is in the shoes of his brothers?

Though things had worked well eventually for Joseph in Egypt, the same could not be said for those who followed after. The path which his brothers and their families then followed eventually ended up for them as enslavement. The economic necessity, the desperation, which brought them to Egypt becomes there a political and human nightmare, as they become identified as 'not us', as different – and because they are seen this way, it becomes acceptable for them to be treated differently: exploited, abused, oppressed. And it is that identification of 'difference' that is the key to, the first step toward, oppression. So the first step toward liberation, we might think, ought then to be the identification of common humanity. The story of the exodus is the story of that liberation; the road back from all that has drawn the descendants of Joseph and his brothers into slavery in the first place; the saga of these slaves setting out on a journey to freedom, to self-determination, to self-realisation. It is a saga in which God takes an active part, in which history and right is on their side. And for every person who has been lured by false promises of jobs and prosperity, who has been tricked or conned, trapped, terrorised, traumatised, stripped of all that made them who they were, this is the saga of their dreams.

It is a saga, however, that does not overcome the division into 'them' and 'us' that has enslaved them. This story demands the destruction of the enemy as the price of freedom. Not only does Moses speak the words of the Lord to Pharaoh – let my people go – he effects their release, and punishes

the oppressors. The lectionary passage from Exodus 14 tells the story, and the passage from Exodus 15 celebrates it – along with Psalm 114. *Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea (Exodus 15.21b).*

When we read the story from the newspaper with which we started, it is often that note of triumph and punishment that we seek. But Psalm 103 sees liberation as not so much connected with destruction as with forgiveness, so that the two are part of the same divine breath – justice for the oppressed is liberation also for the oppressor; it is the route toward the assertion of common humanity, the route away from the division of us and them:

*The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel
The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love
He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger for ever
He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. (Psalm 103.6-10)*

Jesus speaks to his followers, in Matthew 18, of an unlimited forgiveness that they and we have always found hard to take to heart. Psalm 103 tells us that God ‘does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities’ (v.10) – and goes on to emphasise how high above the ways of earth is the love of heaven (v.11). And in the letter to the Romans Paul urges the church to leave judgement of one another to that heavenly love.

And in this country at this time we need to look for that liberation of the oppressed that is also liberation for the oppressor – the end to the trade in people, a trade that thrives on the ideology of ‘us’ and ‘them’. For, while it is essential to encourage the prosecution of those involved in trafficking, it is essential also that we realise how it is our society that provides the engine of that demand for the supply that is produced to meet it. To concentrate solely on the evil of the people with whom we began, disturbingly close to home as they are, is to find a convenient way of forgetting the communal, societal sin that buys into their cynical, divisive, exploitative view of the world, and allows them to ply the trade they do.

We live in a society where demand for slave labour, and the cheap goods it produces – and slave sex, and the cheap thrills it provides, have a ready market. We still live in a culture which often regards ill-treatment of a ‘foreigner’ as less of an issue than ill-treatment of a ‘local’. And we still live too often in an atmosphere of blame, where shame is allowed to land on the victim of these crimes even before it reaches the customers, and where it hardly ever seems to shine a light on a way of living which turns people into commodities.

People, impoverished and desperate in one place, are still lured into slavery by false promises of prosperity and security in another, and instead are thrown into lives of degradation and danger. They are lured by the image we project of ourselves, of ease and plenty, of unlimited material opportunity, of excitement, of freedom. They are at the sharp end of a stick manufactured by the society of which we are a part. So, as we work and pray for liberation for the oppressed, let us also pray that the liberation is for the oppressor too, because that means us. All of us who are members of a society that allows trafficking to carry on are part of the oppression; and if we do not become part of the solution, we remain part of the problem.

Let us pray that we can find that liberation in a new way of living – one that refuses to enslave, or to exploit, or to take advantage of the poor, the weak, the desperate, or the marginalised, or to divide the world into the ‘us’ for whom we care and the ‘them’ who are beyond it. Let us pray that those who have been enslaved by our society’s greed, or lust, or lack of care, or wilful ignorance, can forgive us for our willingness to allow a way of life that deals and trades in weakness and vulnerability, in people and in false promises. And let us live that prayer that brings to fruition the justice and freedom and hope of the One whose promises can be trusted.



Sermon/Homily suggestion 2

Every year millions of the poorest women, children and men are trafficked in our world. This means that they are bought and sold as if they were simply merchandise. They are used, abused and discarded in the way we may discard a McDonald's wrapper!

The following is a tiny part of a true story about one young woman who was trafficked into the UK.

Mo was a well-educated young woman from South Africa and her father, who worked for the government, was murdered, which left Mo vulnerable to traffickers. Mo was sold into the UK and ended up in a brothel. She was locked in a cellar during the day and brought up every night to be raped by 20 men. Mo was subjected to this for over 6 months before she was rescued in a raid. Mo was sent to a Safe House belonging to a charity in the UK. When she first arrived in the safe house, she was unable to sleep in her bedroom and would bring her quilt downstairs into the sitting room, eventually falling asleep with night staff around her. For the first few days she would not let staff out of her sight for more than a few minutes at any one time. After a while Mo learned to sleep alone. She went out

unaccompanied and attended college. She made friends and eventually moved out into her own apartment.

On this Racial Justice Sunday, when we are reflecting upon the fact that God wants all people, from every country in the world, to be treated with dignity and respect, we need to be aware that slavery is rampant. Mo is not the only person who has been trafficked into the UK. Unlike the situation 200+ years ago, slavery today is hidden, but, according to Scotland Yard, traffickers have targeted every city, town and village in the UK. Police at the highest level have said 'Wherever we look, we find, even in the most rural of places.'

The people who are slaves in the UK come from all parts of Africa, all parts of Asia and all parts of Eastern Europe i.e. from all the poorest parts of the world. Unspeakable misery is being inflicted on these victims of trafficking. Mira Sorvino, the UN Goodwill Ambassador and Advocate for victims of trafficking said recently: 'The time is now. The time is last week. We have to get on with it,' because every minute counts in the life of a trafficked person.

More than 20% of all trafficked people are children, and many of them are in our own country. Even though crime is international, it will be enacted in your local area. There will be enslaved people living near you, but they will be hidden and their immense suffering will be hidden from you.

In 2007, 1007 children were brought from one Roma town and forced into petty crime in London, because their families owed money to criminal gangs in their town. The gangs took their children because they could not repay their loans. Now, all the classrooms in that Romanian town are empty. The children live in squalor, while the traffickers live in luxury. Fortunately, these traffickers were caught and punished, but many are not. The lives of all of these children and of countless others, are being destroyed. The Church is encouraging us all to be prophetic in responding to the Call of God to be prophetic in making a stand against this slavery.

However, working with trafficked people isn't only about the strong helping those who are desperate. It is a two-way process. Father Jon Sobrino SJ said: **'Without the poor, there is no Salvation. Without the poor, there is no Church. Without the poor, there is no Gospel!'**

His understanding of the poor, was not only the economically poor, but the outcasts of our society, including trafficked people. This is completely at one with the Mission of Jesus, who at the beginning of His public ministry

said: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has sent me to give good news to the poor ... to proclaim liberty to captives ... to let the oppressed go free'. Those who work with trafficked people know the truth of this; that God has a preferential option for the poor and struggling people of our world. And that there is a wisdom to be gained when we look at our world through the eyes of the outcasts – through the eyes of those at the bottom of the pile. This is a very different view and experience of life from those at the top.

Those who work with trafficked people have this experience and while they work to help, support and heal trafficked people, they find that those for whom they are working, help to transform the lives of the Staff.

4000 years ago Moses heard the Call of God to set God's people free. God is still calling for us to do the same.

HYMN SUGGESTION

Be Still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Anon

Laudate No. 909

Celebration Hymnal No. 70

Other suggested hymns

| Song Title | Writer | Hymn Book/Source |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Walk in the light | Damian Lundy | Laudate No. 771 Celebration Hymnal No. 15 |
| You shall cross the barren desert | Robert J Dufford | Laudate No. 964 Celebration Hymnal No. 830 |
| Though the mountains may fall | Daniel L Schutte | Laudate No. 785 Celebration Hymnal No. 739 |
| Lord of all hopefulness | Jan Struther | Laudate No. 969 Celebration Hymnal No. 386 |
| I will never forget you | Carey Landry | Laudate No. 796 Celebration Hymnal No. 290 Songs of the Spirit 99 |
| Christ beside me | James Quinn | Laudate No. 910 Celebration Hymnal No. 106 |
| Christ, Be Our Light | Bernadette Farrell | Laudate No. 883 Celebration Hymnal No. S10 |

Celebration Hymnal for Everyone

McCrimmon Publishing Company Limited, Great Wakering, Essex, England, 1994

Laudate, Decani Music, 2009

Songs of the Spirit

Kevin Mayhew Publishers 1978

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Loving God, you make us in your image.
Forgive us when we fail to see your image in each other,
when we give in to greed and indifference
when we do not question the systems that are life-denying.
As we are made in your image,
let us live in your image
and be Christ-like
in service, endurance and love.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer
Christian Aid

A Prayer for my Sisters' Keepers

Compassionate God, we pray for a loving heart that will
heed the cries of those who suffer in silence, the pain of sexual exploitation.
May your spirit inspire us to speak out for those who cannot speak, that
their freedom and human dignity may be respected and protected.
Give us the courage to walk in solidarity, prayer and action with our sisters
and brothers.
We pray especially for a change of mind and heart in those who perpetrate
the evil of human trafficking, may your light transform our world and beckon
us out of darkness into a new dawn.
Sr Angela Cronin O.S.U.

A Prayer for my Sister

Today my sister suffers, at the cold hands
Of an unjust world that makes her vulnerable.
At the greedy hands of those who sell her.
At the oppressive hands of those who control her.
At the rough hands of those who buy her.
At the hushed hands of those who say nothing.
Today my sister suffers.
Compassionate God, today claim my sister for yourself.
Ease her suffering – hold her hand.
Shine your light to dispel her nightmares.
Give her the strength to live through today.
Give her the hope for a better tomorrow.
Theresa Helm

O God, we cannot express what our minds barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of women and girls deceived, transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and abused because of human greed and profit. We can only lift our voices and cry to you 'Strengthen the broken-hearted'.

Our hearts and spirits are saddened when the dignity and rights of those who are trafficked are violated, threatened by deception and force. We cry out against this degrading practice of trafficking and pray, 'Heal the broken-hearted'.

Give us the wisdom and courage to learn more about this tragic reality in our world. Help us stand in solidarity with our sisters so that together we may find ways to nurture that freedom which you give us all. We will be there, howsoever, we will be there.

Adapted from a prayer by G. Cassini. From Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) flyer

God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
whose family tree both inspires awe and hints at scandal,
in every generation you have freely called to your purposes
those whose names we could not pronounce.
And so we pray:
Keep us from embracing any sense of identity
which is grounded in what or who we are not,
And bless us with the sure knowledge of whose we are

God, whose heart is the first of all hearts to go out to us
In times of confusion and pain,
In the very sinews of your love
You are moved with compassion for your people.
And so we pray:
In your great mercy,
free us from the temptation
to protect ourselves with excuses,
and lead us into solidarity
with those who journey in darkness,
knowing that even the darkness is not dark to you.

God, whose Spirit is known
In the bringing together of those
who were once kept apart,
you have announced good news

in the very human accents
which have become most dear to us.

And so we pray:

Come, Holy Spirit,
and celebrate in us that love of God in Jesus Christ
which need never be measured and will never run short,
and for whose cadences you have given us,
without distinction, the ears to hear.

*From What the Bible says about the Stranger, Irish Inter-Church Meeting
2007*

Compassionate God,
open our hearts
that we may feel the breath and play of your Spirit,
unclench our hands
that we may reach our to one another in openness and generosity,
free our lips
that we may speak for those whose voices are not heard,
unblock our ears
to hear the cries of the broken-hearted,
and open our eyes
to see Christ in friend and stranger,
that in sharing our love and pain,
our poverty and prosperity,
we may move towards that peace and justice which comes from you
and so be bearers of divine reconciliation.

Amen.

Annabel-Shilson Thomas, United Kingdom

*(In **Celebrating One World**, p.141, Ed Linda Jones et al, in association with
CAFOD HarperCollins 1998)*

Activities for children



Introduction on Human trafficking

One in six people who are forced to work are victims of what's called human trafficking, a business that makes huge amounts of money for those who run it.

It's thought there are about 5 or 6 million children who are forced to work. Some of them are born into slavery, others are sold by their parents or stolen - they work in farming, factories and for richer people.

Slavery today

Modern slavery is different from historical slavery because although today people may live in awful conditions and be forced to do things, they still have human rights. So for example if a young girl was kidnapped today and made to work as a servant, but then managed to escape, then the police would protect her. In the old days, if she was a slave and escaped she would be returned to her master by the police and probably whipped for being a disobedient slave.

A. Domestic Slavery

Materials required: dirty potatoes, scrubbing brush, bowl of water
'BUT HE'S ALREADY MADE IT PLAIN HOW TO LIVE, WHAT TO DO, WHAT GOD IS LOOKING FOR IN MEN AND WOMEN. IT'S QUITE SIMPLE. DO WHAT IS FAIR AND JUST TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR, BE COMPASSIONATE AND LOYAL IN YOUR LOVE, AND DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY—TAKE GOD SERIOUSLY.' MICAH 6:8, THE MESSAGE.

Take a potato and scrub it clean. Some young people and children will do domestic or repetitive tasks like this thousands of times a week, and they'll earn almost nothing. As you scrub, pray for young people and children who have been caught in domestic slavery or child labour. Ask God to provide a way out for them.

B. Identity

Materials required: a full-length, free-standing mirror
'THIS IS MY SON, CHOSEN AND MARKED BY MY LOVE, DELIGHT OF MY LIFE.' MATTHEW 3:17, THE MESSAGE.

Look in the mirror. Who are you? What makes up your identity? Your name? The place you live? The things you like doing? Your family and friends? When people are trafficked, their identities are often completely wiped out. Their passports destroyed and they are given a new name to live under. Because they no longer officially exist, they no longer have any rights or protection. How would you feel if one day your identity was suddenly deleted, wiped out, rubbed away?

God designed you and knew you long before you were born. Even before you had been given a name and an official identity, he knew all about you. Nothing that happens to you in life can ever change that. You are his child, marked with his love, the delight of his life.

Thank God for who you are, for who he made you to be. Pray for people who have been trafficked and have lost their identity, that they would be rescued and given a chance to start again.

C. Human Worth

Materials required: fashion magazines

'WHAT'S THE PRICE OF TWO OR THREE BIRDS? SOME LOOSE CHANGE, RIGHT? BUT GOD NEVER OVERLOOKS A SINGLE ONE. AND HE PAYS EVEN GREATER ATTENTION TO YOU, DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL – EVEN NUMBERING THE HAIRS ON YOUR HEAD. SO DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY ALL THIS BULLY TALK. YOU'RE WORTH MORE THAN A MILLION CANARIES.' LUKE 12:6, 7. THE MESSAGE

Look at some of the pictures in these magazines. According to the media, being 'worth something' means looking good, having a lot of money or being famous. But God doesn't measure our worth that way. To him, we're precious and valuable, no matter how we look, how much we earn or how many people have heard of us.

Pray for people you know who feel rubbish and worthless. Ask God to show them how much he loves them. Pray for people who have been trafficked, that they will be set free and discover their own true worth.

D. Poverty

Materials required: strips of white paper, pens, stapler or sticky tape, posters from a development agency

'WHEN YOU'RE KIND TO THE POOR, YOU HONOUR GOD' PROVERBS 14:31. THE MESSAGE

Set up the posters to remind people of situations of poverty around the world. Lots of us wore Make Poverty History bands in 2005 and campaigned to make an end to poverty. Poverty is one contributing factor towards human trafficking. Make a new band from white paper. Write on it a prayer for people in need. Attach it around your wrist to remind you to keep praying.

From Salvation Army resources used with permission and adapted

Activities for young people

A. This activity will explore factors that cause people trafficking to happen. The scenarios ask each young person to place themselves in the position of someone vulnerable to trafficking and ask – if this was me, what decision would I make?

Guidance: The scenarios below are based on real life stories. Ask one person in each group to read the scenario out to the rest of the group. Ask the group, in 5 minutes, to answer 2 questions: If you were in this situation what would you do and how does this situation and decision make you feel. Ask the group to decide what to do and why. After this read out what really happened to the person in the scenario. The key point is the exploitative nature of trafficking – traffickers take full advantage of vulnerable people – from families who have no access to food, water or work to young women desperate to escape their lives of poverty to work abroad.

Scenario 1

Ivan is 27 years old and lives in Perm in Russia. Ivan works for a company in their computer department. He lives close to his family, but even though he had a good job his family is not well off and struggles financially. The cost of food, petrol and other commodities keep rising but his pay is never increased to match the cost of living. Ivan sees an advert in a local newspaper for a job agency recruiting construction workers to work in Spain. The salary offered is US\$1,200 per month – much more than his monthly salary of just \$200 and more than he could ever hope to earn in Perm. He has called the agency to find out more and they have offered to book his plane ticket to Madrid on the condition that he would pay back the money when he started work. **What should Ivan do? Why did you make this decision?**

What happened next

Ivan decided to go to Spain, at least for a short period of time. He was picked up from the airport by a person from the ‘agency’ who took his passport. Ivan was taken to Portugal and forced to work on a construction site without pay for several months. The site was surrounded by barbed wire. Without his passport he was afraid that the Portuguese authorities would arrest him. One day Ivan managed to escape and begged his way to Germany. Because he did not have a passport the German authorities arrested him, took away what little money he had and deported him to Russia.

Scenario 2

Alise is 15 years old and lives in a town in Latvia. At school, Alise is doing well – she also works hard and puts in the effort to do well in exams. In particular, she has a natural flair for modern languages – English is her favourite. At home, Alise generally gets on with her family although her sisters can drive her crazy. Her family aren't particularly wealthy but they survive. Alise enjoys doing various things outside of school – ice skating and skiing in winter, swimming in the summer.

One morning, Alise was flicking through the local paper over breakfast. She saw an advert in the paper that made her choke her food – it was a summer work abroad scheme for Latvian girls to work in London for a few months, selling ice cream. Alise couldn't believe it – she had been longing to go to England for ages and here was a great opportunity. She would go back to school after a fantastic summer abroad with perfect English and lots of money saved up. **If you were Alise, what would you do? Why would you make this choice?**

What happened next

The 'work abroad' scheme advertised in the local paper was a trick used by traffickers. Alise was trafficked to Lithuania and then into the UK. In the Heathrow Airport coffee bar she was sold for £4000. Alise was then trafficked to London where she was raped and beaten. She was then trafficked to Birmingham and forced to work as a prostitute in a brothel, seeing up to 40 men a day. Under 'Operation Pentameter' Alise was rescued by the police and taken to a safe house. She is now safe from her traffickers but remains highly traumatised.

Scenario 3

Nazia was born into a family in a North Indian village. North India is huge place – vibrant with colour and energy, but also rural with lots of desert space. There are literally hundreds of miles separating villages from the nearest town. In the rural areas there is little public transport, few hospitals and schools. Many children grow up with little or no opportunity to go to school and never learn to read and write. Nazia's family lived in one such village; they were extremely poor and there was very little opportunity for employment within the village. Nazia's family didn't own land so they couldn't grow food for the family or sell anything at the market to raise money.

When Nazia was 13 years old, a man arrived in the village and approached the family; he was in his sixties and he lived in England. The man asked Nazia's father if he would give Nazia's younger sister's hand in marriage. The father refused because she was only ten years old.

Not happy with the response, the man ordered his 'bodyguards' to beat her father and brother who were very badly hurt and asked for Nazia's hand in marriage. In exchange for his bride, the man offered Nazia a comfortable place to live in England and money so the family could buy food. **If you were Nazia's father, what would you do? Why would you make this choice?**

What happened next

After more threats and abuse, Nazia's father finally allowed the man take her for his bride. The man paid around £50 for her. Nazia was brought to England by this man, where she was made to undertake domestic chores everyday. She was treated as a slave and was made to feel as though her life was not worth anything. She was physically and sexually abused, raped by various men, which eventually led to her becoming pregnant. Once Nazia realised that she was pregnant she knew she could not expose her child to a life of slavery. She ran away from her abuser and escaped to London to find support and a better way of life for her and her child.

Scenario 4

Mary is 19 years old, from small town in west Mexico. She lives with her family – parents, grandmother, brothers and sisters. The house is a little cramped and noisy but Mary loves it. Along with her mum, dad and 2 of her brothers, Mary has to work long hours each day to help provide for her family. Wages aren't very high so it takes a lot to keep the family provided for. When Mary was at school she used to dream of going to America to work and bringing her family with her so her mum and dad no longer had to work long and back breaking hours. One day a man came to the village. He was recruiting young men and women to work as waitresses, waiters and cleaners in a hotel his family had set up in America. Mary couldn't believe her luck – at last the opportunity to go to America! She was worried about missing her family and she was a little disappointed that the work was only waitressing and cleaning. To reassure her, the man told her she could call home whenever she wanted, and there were definite 'management opportunities' in the hotel for her to progress. **What should Mary do? Why would you make this choice?**

What happened next

Mary was trafficked into America where she was verbally and physically abused by her trafficker and raped several times. She was forced to work in a factory where she packaged vegetables, but was never paid for her employment. Mary was not allowed to leave the apartment in which she was staying unless she was going to work and her trafficker kept feeding her a white powder – later determined to be cocaine – to keep her submissive to him. The trafficker constantly threatened her to stop her running away. One of the rapes was the source of her son’s conception. Mary had previously had a miscarriage due to her abuse but she was not allowed to seek medical attention. Mary is now in a Salvation Army domestic violence shelter where she presently resides with her 11-month-old son.

From STOP THE TRAFFIK resources and used with permission

B. Bible Study

Throughout history, different forms of slavery have been practised in most societies. During the times of the Old and New Testaments there were slaves so slavery is mentioned in the Bible. At different times in history, some people have misused the Bible to justify and endorse the use of slaves. However, since the time of William Wilberforce in the 19th century, Christians have been involved in anti-slavery and anti-trafficking campaigns because they believe that slavery is wrong and against the teaching of the Bible.

Ask people to read out the following verses: **Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; Luke 18:15-16**. What do these verses have to say about the dignity and value of human beings?

- We are all made in God’s image
- In God’s eyes, there is no difference between slave and free person, male and female – we are all valuable.
- The disciples tried to stop children coming to Jesus because they thought they weren’t important. Jesus welcomed them and blessed them. He welcomes and blesses all those who are not considered important by society.

Read together **Luke 4:1-21**. Explain that this happened right at the start of Jesus' ministry, just after he had been baptised. This is his manifesto – what his mission on earth is all about. Discuss with the group:

- What kinds of people does Jesus mention in the passage that he read?
- What hope might this passage give to someone who was trafficked?
- As Jesus is no longer here on earth, who is left to carry this out?
- What does this tell us about how we should respond to the issue of trafficking?

Get young people to write 'we believe ...' statements that express what they believe about the worth of human beings, the issue of trafficking and the role that Jesus wants us to play in it.

C. Reflection and Prayer

Read this verse as you light a large candle.

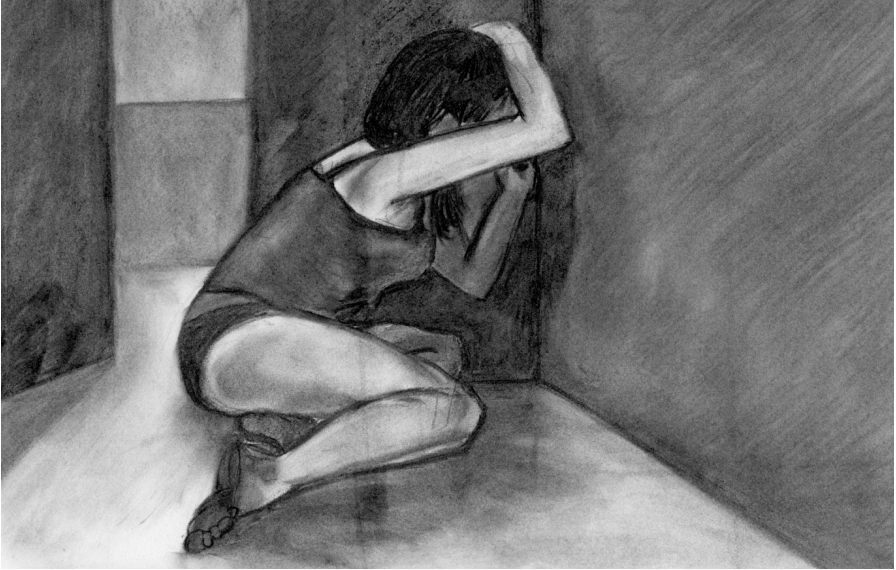
'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world and all who live in it.'
Psalm 24:1, NIV. Invite young people to pray for a country where trafficking takes place. As they pray, they can light a tea-light candle and put it on their chosen country on a map on the floor.

Prayer suggestions

- Pray that governments will make laws which stop people being able to traffic other human beings.
- Pray for organisations who are working to highlight the issues, campaign and who are rescuing trafficked people.
- Pray for people who do the trafficking, that God will change their hearts and they will stop abusing others.
- Pray that God's people will take a stand and speak out about this issue whenever they can.

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PERSONAL STORIES FROM TRAFFICKED PEOPLE



Katya's story: trafficked to the UK, sent home to torture and then re-trafficked to the UK

The experience of one woman, enslaved by traffickers and shuttled across Europe to serve the sex trade, highlights the need for urgent reform of the law. When they assessed her case, British immigration officials knew that Katya, a vulnerable 18-year-old from Moldova, had been trafficked and forced into prostitution but ruled that she would face no real danger if she was sent back. Days after her removal from the UK, her traffickers tracked her down to the Moldovan village where she had grown up. She was gang-raped, strung up by a rope from a tree, and forced to dig her own grave. One of her front teeth was pulled out with a pair of pliers. Shortly afterwards she was re-trafficked, first to Israel and later back to the UK. The Home Office decision in 2011 to pay her substantial damages has raised serious questions about the way Britain treats trafficked women. She told a newspaper that British police need to do much more to protect women like her and to prevent others from being trafficked into prostitution. 'Just look around you - see how many girls there are like me. They are coming all the time. I see them every day - in tube stations, all made up, early in the

morning. Maybe for you it is difficult to see them, but I see them,' said Katya 'I think the police should work better to stop this. Why don't you shut down saunas and brothels? Then there would be no prostitutes, no pimps.'

Source: Guardian

A woman from Eastern Europe deceived into coming to the UK on the promise of a 'good job'

A 22-year old eastern European woman had come to the UK on the promise of 'a good job' in a hotel and an income she could send back to her impoverished grandparents. Instead, in circumstances typical for many trafficked women, she was locked in a basement and told that her family back home would be killed unless she worked as a prostitute, receiving up to 40 clients a day. This woman had to earn her captors £300 a day to pay off the debt of £20,000 she had allegedly incurred in the journey to Britain. She was subjected to a fine if she refused to have anal or unprotected sex, or if a client did not find her attractive. She was regularly gang raped and beaten to prevent her from escaping. *Source: Medaille Trust*

An Indian woman who was trafficked and rescued

'I am from India, a Punjabi girl. My heart was broken by the traffickers. I felt that everyone hated me and I started to hate myself. I felt very weak in my heart. I was in a dark place, lonely, without hope and no love. What hurt me the most was the fact that my own people were my traffickers. Since my experience, I've lost my father's respect and love, and my sister subsequently died. I feel I have paid a big price for what has happened to me. When I was rescued, I stayed with my family and during those months I did not have any money, not even one pence. I was threatened by them and I started to hate myself again. I decided to take my life one day. But God heard my prayers, I had been crying out to him. Through other people I came to an organisation that helped me. It has a small name but in this name it held a big meaning for me. It meant at last I had hope. They gave me love and my respect back, and taught me how to respect myself again. They gave me clothes and money, and gave me my life back. To them I need to say thank you, especially to the manager who provided all the lovely staff for me. And also the house staff for all they have done. God bless them.' *Source: Medaille Trust*

A woman trafficked from Nigeria to the UK on the promise of legitimate work

A 23 year old woman was brought to the UK five years ago from Nigeria on the promise of legitimate work. When she arrived the people who trafficked her forced her to work for them as a prostitute for over four months. She did not get paid because her exploiters claimed she owed them £30,000 to

cover her travelling and living costs. After months of abuse the victim managed to escape because she knew someone who could help her with food and a place to stay. Many victims remain hidden for much longer because they are isolated from contact with normal society. The traffickers responded to her escape by threatening the victim's family in Nigeria, telling them that if she didn't return to work they would be harmed. The family moved to another city, but the traffickers tracked them down and shot and killed her father. Even though the victim was able to escape her physical abusers, she is still feeling the effects of that abuse five years later. She is not being forced to work as a prostitute any more, but she is always anxious that she might see her exploiters again or that they may find out where she is. The victim is trying to rebuild her life but it is a very slow process. She finds that every day something triggers memories of the abuse that she wants to forget. *Source: Serious Organised Crime Agency*

Anya's story: trafficked to Ireland after being deceived

Anya grew up in a very poor country where there were few opportunities for advancement. When she was seventeen years old, a friend of a friend told her she could get a well-paid job as a waitress in Europe and could train to become a hair-dresser. She was introduced to an agent who paid for her to get a passport and arranged her travel costs. She arrived at Cork airport on a weekend when security was lax, and was met by somebody she did not know. He took her passport and brought her to a house occupied by two other women from abroad. Very soon she discovered that the 'job' she was to do was to provide sexual services for men on a 24/7 basis. When she objected, her 'minder' beat her up. He then went on to rape her. He warned her that she was an illegal immigrant and that he had her passport. He then left her locked up to 'think things over', as he said. He also reminded her that she owed him €3,000 to cover the cost of her travel and said her family at home would suffer if she did not earn that money quickly. The other women advised her that if she went to the authorities she would be sent back to her own country at once — and she knew that the €3,000 would then be demanded from her family. Anya felt she was left with no choice but to agree to prostitute herself at least for a time. She felt confident that one of the men who came to her for sex would listen to her story and would help her. However, she soon found that she was not allowed to stay long enough in any town or city to find her way around and get to know people. Each week she had to move to a different location. Furthermore, she found that the men who came looking for sex had no interest in her story or in her as a person. They made it clear that they simply wanted 'good value for money'. They wanted her to pretend to be excited by the sex and to enjoy it. Many of them also demanded perverted forms of sex, and sex without any protection. Whenever she failed to give them what they demanded they complained to

the pimp and he beat her up again. Some of the ‘customers’ linked sex with violence, and at times she was seriously injured. Anya was given a mobile phone and she had hoped to use it to contact some friend to rescue her from her slavery. But she found she could use it only to receive calls from ‘clients’ or from her pimp-manager. Even when she was allowed out she was too scared to talk or to seek help from anybody. Anya now finds herself trapped — tied down, not physically, but effectively imprisoned by her fear and by being cut off from any help. She has been silenced and can see no escape. She is deeply ashamed, blaming herself for what has happened to her. She has been severely damaged at a psychological level and is now in a very depressed state. She is also beginning to suspect that she has become infected with HIV/AIDS as a result of unprotected sex. She is sliding into a state of deep depression. *Source: Action to Prevent Trafficking, Ireland*

Sergey’s story: trafficked after being promised a job in Spain

Sergey is 27 years old and is from Perm in Russia. In 2001, he saw an advert in a local newspaper for a job agency. They were looking for construction workers to work in Spain. The salary offered was US\$1,200 per month. This was much more than his monthly salary of just \$200 and more than he could ever hope to earn in Perm. He applied to the agency who booked his plane ticket to Madrid. They said he would need to pay back the money for the ticket when he started work. When he arrived in Spain, Sergey was picked up by a person from the ‘agency’ who took his passport. He was taken to Portugal and forced to work on a construction site without pay for several months. The site was surrounded by barbed wire. Without his passport he was afraid that the Portuguese authorities would arrest him. One day Sergey managed to escape and begged his way to Germany. Because he did not have a passport the German authorities arrested him. He says that the police beat him and took away what little money he had. Then they sent him back to Russia. Now back home, Sergey is very traumatised by his experience. He suffered psychological problems and for several months was unable to work. He received no counselling or support to help him overcome his ordeal. Meanwhile his traffickers remain unpunished. *Source: Anti-Slavery International*

Charles’ story: child trafficking in Uganda

Charles became a soldier in Uganda when he was just eight years old. He didn’t have any choice about it. He was taken from his home by men from the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA are rebels who are fighting the government in the North of Uganda. Charles did not go through a well-planned training programme. Some soldiers in the LRA have machine guns, but mostly they use machetes. The LRA does not have a uniform, and sometimes their soldiers have been known to wear stolen uniforms from the

Ugandan Army. Children have to stay in the army until they manage to escape or are rescued. Conditions are not good in the rebel army. Food is scarce and the children are badly treated. While Charles was a captive he was shot in his leg and lower back and was forced to act against his will. Charles was also regularly beaten. At times they used a machete to punish him. On one later occasion he was whipped 200 times because he left a bomb behind. The LRA rule their child soldiers by fear, forcing them to commit acts that will haunt them for years. Charles thinks he killed three people. To stop him from escaping, he was also forced to beat someone very badly. Children are told that once they have killed someone they will never be able to go back to normal life with their families. Charles is now 15 and is no longer a soldier. He managed to escape but he has horrible memories of his time in the army. It will take him a long time to get over it. *Source: Tearfund*

Sokha's and Makara's story: child trafficking in Cambodia

Sokha and Makara are from Poipet in Cambodia. When they were just 14 and 15 years old, their mother was ill with a liver complaint. The family needed money to pay for drugs to treat her. They also hoped to buy some land to build a home. A man promised good jobs for the girls in nearby Thailand, and offered the family some money if they would let them go. Sokha and Makara were excited at the thought of being able to help the family with the money they earned. The reality turned out to be very different. The man was a trafficker. There were no 'good jobs' for the girls in Thailand. Sokha's mother died within a year, and the family couldn't afford to buy the land that they had dreamed of. Sokha, who is now 17, says, 'I felt cheated. The traffickers used us for slave jobs, and while they earned lots of money, we only got enough to feed ourselves each day.' She explains how she and Makara, 16, were given jobs selling fruit, but it did not pay enough. *Source: Tearfund*

Prjua and Ajay's story: child trafficking in India

Prjua, aged 9 and her brother Ajay, aged 7, lived on Thane train station in Mumbai, India. They lived with their parents who were both alcoholics and were not able to look after them very well. Prjua and Ajay loved to go to the Asha Deep Day Centre, run by Oasis India. They learned to read and write and were given the opportunity to play. Prjua and Ajay went to the centre every day for about three months and really enjoyed it. But suddenly they disappeared. The staff at the centre were worried about them and so they went looking for them. They found Prjua and Ajay's parents and asked them what had happened. Prjua and Ajay's father said that a man had come and offered money for them and that he had sold them for the equivalent of \$30. That was the last the father and the staff of Asha Deep ever heard of them. *Source: Oasis India*

TAKE FURTHER ACTION SECTION

A. Write to your elected representatives

England – write to the Prime minister and your Member of Parliament

Ireland – write to the Taoiseach and your Teachta Dála

Northern Ireland – write to the First Minister and your Member of the Legislative Assembly

Scotland – write to the First Minister and your Member of the Scottish Parliament

Wales – write to the First Minister and your Assembly Member

To find out the name of your AM visit, www.assemblywales.org.uk

To find out the name of your MLA, MP and MSP visit www.theyworkforyou.com

To find out the name of your TD, visit www.kildarestreet.com

Advocacy means speaking up on someone's behalf. We need to let people in power know that we want to stop human trafficking so they can do something about it. Writing letters to your elected representatives will have an impact as it shows that people are concerned about the issue. It is most effective if you can communicate in your own words rather than copying a standard letter. It is best to write about a specific issue that concerns you.

Key points to make

- Say people trafficking is wrong and that more action needs to be taken to prevent it
- Ask that the law is reformed so that trafficking victims are not sent back to their countries to be re-trafficked, and ask that government agencies do more to help and protect trafficked people
- Further action is needed to prosecute the traffickers
- Action is needed by government to reduce the demand for trafficked people. Prevention efforts that focus on education have not significantly reduced the number of victims. Sweden, Norway and South Korea have enacted laws to penalise the purchase of sex from controlled persons, reducing demand.

Adapted from STOP THE TRAFFIK and United Nations Women resources with permission

B. Find out how you can support some key organisations

There are organisations working to combat human trafficking and we have listed some below. Look at their websites and find out about their work and how you can help them through volunteering, fundraising, awareness raising in your church etc.

C. For further information and resources

Act to Prevent Trafficking Ireland www.aptireland.org

Anti-Slavery International: www.antislavery.org

Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking in Europe: www.chaste.org.uk

Medaille Trust: www.medaille.co.uk

Stop the Traffik: www.stophetraffik.org

United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre: www.ukhtc.org

Order of service suggestion

Please note this is a suggestion which can be adapted

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Welcome/Call to Worship | |
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| Lectionary Reading – Old Testament | 13 |
| Lectionary Reading – New Testament | 13 |
| Hymn | 27 |
| Sermon/Homily | 20 |
| Hymn | 27 |
| Prayer/Intercession | 29 |
| Children/Young People’s slot | 32 |
| Stories/Testimonies | 40 |
| Hymn | 27 |

Created by God, treated like slaves: Tackling human trafficking

'Love your neighbour as yourself, do this and you will live'
Luke. 10:27-28



Feedback form

The purpose of the feedback is to assist us in developing materials for Racial Justice Sunday in 2012.

The Racial Justice Sunday materials provide resources, suggestions and stories for worship and other activities to be used on Racial Justice Sunday (11 September 2011) or any Sunday in the year. This year's materials are available online and can be downloaded via CTBI, CARJ and websites of various denominations and national ecumenical instruments. Each year the materials developed are intended to be adaptable and user-friendly for Churches across the United Kingdom.

We would greatly appreciate and value your comments on how useful these materials have been.

I have used the Racial Justice Sunday (2011) materials and I have found it to be:

- Very helpful and relevant
- Helpful and relevant
- Not helpful and relevant

How user-friendly was the Racial Justice Sunday (2011) material?

- Very user-friendly
- Reasonably user-friendly
- Not use-friendly

What in the materials have you found most helpful?

What in the materials have you found least helpful?

What suggestions do you have for improving the materials for 2012?

What would you suggest as a theme for Racial Justice Sunday 2012?

Would you prefer to access the RJ Sunday materials in 2011 online?

Yes No Not sure

Additional comments:

Please return your comments to:
Racial Justice Sunday 2011
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX

For information about our activities and other CTBI resources,
please visit www.ctbi.org.uk

Thank you.



CARJ ORDER FORM FOR CATHOLIC PARISHES

For additional RJS Packs

Please note that we normally send a 1 RJS pack to every parish, however if you would like additional packs please complete this form and return it to us.

RJS Packs can also be downloaded on-line at www.carj.org.uk

Title _____ Initials _____ Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____ Email _____

Parish/Organisation _____

Diocese _____

| Quantity | Items | Donation |
|----------|---|----------|
| | Racial Justice Sunday Pack (includes bible reflection, suggested homily, prayers and hymns, activities for children & young people, A4 poster, feedback form) | |
| | Additional Posters A4 | |

Materials are free of charge however if you would like to send a donation, please send a cheque payable to CARJ, or go to www.carj.org.uk/donate

 **Please return this form to**
Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ)
9 Henry Road
London
N4 2LH

Email: info@carj.org.uk

Tel: 020 8802 8080

Fax: 020 8211 0808

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Stop Human Trafficking

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Racial Justice Sunday
11 September 2011

**PEOPLE
SHOULDN'T BE
BOUGHT
& SOLD**



To join CARJ or to make a contribution
to the future work of CARJ:
contact CARJ, 9 Henry Road, London N4.
020 8802 8080 info@carj.org.uk www.carj.org.uk
Cheques payable to CARJ
or the Catholic Association for Racial Justice.
CARJ is a registered charity no. 291601

