

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**  
**Prayer Service for**  
**Canadian National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (February 8)**

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, we come to you today in praise and thanksgiving for creating all human beings in Your likeness and image. We are all Your precious and beloved children. We gather now in prayer, in hopes that You will help us grow in awareness and understanding of the destruction and devastation of human trafficking. We ask that Your Holy Spirit fill our hearts with courageous compassion for not only those who we can see, but also for those we are unable to see and for those who are locked in the darkness of present day slavery and bondage of human trafficking.

**Reader 1:** Human trafficking affects all of our lives and communities. Some of the food we eat may be harvested or prepared by women and men, girls and boys, bent over in long labour, who themselves are hungry or starving. We may be wearing an article of clothing or using a cell phone that was produced in a factory where workers are forced into assembly lines for excruciatingly long hours, seven days a week and for meagre wages that will not provide for their families. We may be wearing a beautiful diamond that was mined by men who were forced into labour and lost their young sons to militia movements that force these boys to execute unimaginable violence within their communities. A house down the street may be a place where young women and girls are taken to be sexually exploited.

Most of these children of God are unable to break free from their erratic and desolate lives, as the reality for most is that they live in debt bondage to their captors, or their identification papers have been confiscated to prevent them from leaving or reporting abuse to the authorities. All of these children of God are living in a darkness most of us choose not to see.

**Reader 2:** *When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...*

*Luke 4:16-18*

**Reader 3:** After drug dealing, human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms trade as the second largest criminal industry in the world and it is the fastest growing. Women and children represent 80% of those trafficked. Annually 500,000 to two million people are trafficked worldwide, and 800,000 to 900,000 victims are trafficked across international borders. There is a victim of human trafficking in the world every 60 seconds. It is at least a nine billion dollar business. Nearly every country is involved in the web of trafficking activities.

**Reader 4:** *The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have laboured...*

*Isaiah 62:8*

**Reader 5:** Human trafficking is fuelled by a demand for cheap labour or services, or for commercial sex acts. Human traffickers are those who victimize others in their desire to profit from the demand which exists. Labour and sex trafficking persist and thrive for a number of reasons, including a lack of community awareness of this issue, improperly trained or untrained government and community response units or organizations, ineffective or dormant laws to address the crime, a lack of safety nets

for victims, and law enforcement that does not investigate and prosecute the crime. Human traffickers perceive little risk or deterrence to affect their criminal operations.

Individuals willing to buy sex create a market that makes it profitable for traffickers to exploit children and adults. Consumers willing to buy goods and services from industries that rely on forced labour create a profit incentive for traffickers to maximize revenue with minimal production costs. Left unchecked, human trafficking will continue to flourish in environments where traffickers can reap substantial monetary gains with relatively low risk of discovery.

**Reader 6:** Trafficked persons are looked upon by their captors as dispensable commodities. We must have the courage to see them as human beings, each with their own story:

### **Atem's Story**

This young slave boy is only 10 years old and seems at first to be a quiet and sullen boy. He was taken from his village in Ayen at age six into slavery in the north for four years in the city of Setef. "Well," the translator said. "He is saying that there were six or seven slaves with him that were trying to escape and they were all beaten and they were being killed right in front of them. He is saying that the raiders raped the women a lot on the way. 'Yes, many times. I know all of their names even,' he said." The translator hands the boy something to eat and says, "He is saying that he doesn't have a bed to sleep on or a blanket. When the work is finished at night he goes to the stable and sleeps next the cows to stay warm. He was not free."

### **Reader 7:**

#### **Marta's Story**

My name is Marta and I am 17 years old. My dream is to be a Hollywood actress and to live in a mansion. Back home, I saved money to take an acting class in the city. In the class, a friend showed me an advertisement for a modelling job overseas. He said he had some connections and could get me in. He also said the money was great, and that his cousin got a TV commercial through this job that year. I was so happy. I got my passport and my friend held on to it and organized all of my visa paperwork. It was my first time on a plane. I watched a movie and pictured myself in it. My dreams were coming true. When we landed, I was tired and confused. We went to a hotel and I was locked in. Two hours later a stranger came in and told me the new arrangements. I would be a nude dancer at this man's club. Initially I stood up for myself but then I was beaten and he burned me with his cigarette. He showed me a paper with my family's name and address written on it and threatened that he would kill them if I did not cooperate. I am helpless.

### **Reader 8:**

*For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*

*Isaiah 61:8*

### **Reader 9:**

Jesus, Son of the Living God  
St. Peter Claver  
St. Kateri Tekawitha  
St. Lucy  
St. Mary Magdalene  
St. Joan of Arc  
St. Maria Goretti  
St. Agnes of Rome

### **All**

*Lord Hear our Prayer  
Pray for us*

All holy men & women

**Leader:** Human trafficking denigrates the value of human life and obstructs its victims from reaching their God-given potential in life. As awareness grows of the modern day tragedy of human trafficking we are called to move into action. We must write letters and advocate to governments to continue to find ways to end human trafficking and provide services and support for its victims. As members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada we must create social awareness and educate the public. As Christians we believe that all human beings are made in the likeness and image of God that every person is of intrinsic worth before God. Therefore, let us now bow our heads in one moment of silence to honour those children of God living in the darkness of trafficking and to ask our heavenly Father for the courage to speak out and take action to bring justice to His land and to His people.

*Observe one minute of silence with possibly one candle burning and the lights dimmed.*

Life Member Nancy Simms  
National Sub-Committee of Community Life

## Other Ideas for Human Trafficking Awareness Day

*Adapted from "Human Trafficking Awareness Day — Worship Service Outline" by Barbara Anderson © 2009 American Baptist Women's Ministries, [abwministries.org](http://abwministries.org). Posted on the Break the Chains and Stop the Pain website in November 2009*

1. Plan a community awareness event and invite speakers from a local human trafficking awareness organization, police department, or Salvation Army.
2. Host a Human Trafficking Mission Fair for local churches in your community. Invite local organizations to arrange a display table with information materials; a speaker; a dinner with a free-will offering to benefit a human trafficking abolitionist group or outreach to trafficking survivors or other related organization.
3. Ask your local library to organize a display in the month of February that features library books on the subject of human trafficking. Make a display board to place with the book display.
4. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper on the issue or write a guest commentary on the issue for the paper.
5. Organize an awareness/fundraiser event to support a local human trafficking abolitionist or outreach organization.
6. Invite women in your community to a Human Trafficking Awareness Breakfast with a speaker.
7. Hold a book discussion using a book on the issue of human trafficking. *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers is a great book for this type of event. You might want to do this in conjunction with your local library.
8. Movie Night—Show one of the recommended movies featured on the "Break the Chains and Stop the Pain" website ([abwmbreakthechains.org](http://abwmbreakthechains.org)) and host a discussion afterwards.
9. Prayer Walk/Candlelight Vigil—Organize a prayer walk in your community bringing awareness that human trafficking happens in every community. End at your town center or a church with candles and a time of prayer.
10. Create a traveling mural focusing on victims of human trafficking. (This is a great way to get youth involved!) Begin in your church and arrange for the mural to be on display at a different church, the public library, or town hall in your community each week throughout February. It could also be accompanied by an informational display on the issue.
11. Plan a brown-bag lunch time discussion at your workplace, sharing with your colleagues about the issue of human trafficking.