

## **Trafficking of Women and Children Workshop for Parish Councils**

This workshop is designed for a parish council meeting and takes approximately 30–45 minutes. A leader, two readers and a scribe are required.

**Leader:** *Welcome, opening prayer and introduction (5–10 minutes)*

**Opening Prayer:** (Lamentations 5:1, 11, 13, 15)  
“O God, remember what has happened to us; consider and see our degradation.

The women in Zion have been raped, the young girls in the town of Judah. Youths have been put to the mill, boys stagger under loads of wood. Joy has vanished from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning.”

### **Introduction**

**Reader 1:** What the church teaches: *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II, No. 27  
“...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men [and women] are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonor to the Creator.”

**Leader:** Why are we here? As *companions on the journey*, to explore the horrendous issue of human trafficking, particularly of women and children.

It is a form of violence, of human rights violations. It continues, and is even growing, because it has enormous economic benefit for the traffickers and for the governments that sanction it. The enormity of the problem is hidden but it is in all countries and undermines the dignity of all persons, particularly women and children.

Resolution 04.05 End Trafficking of Children states in part: “Canada is being used as a destination and transit point for children who are being bought and sold on the international market for the sex trade even though the *2004 Trafficking in Persons Report* places Canada in Tier 1 with monitored countries who fully comply with minimum standards.”

**Reader 2:** Some statistics on the world-wide situation of trafficking:

Every year, between 700,000 and four million women and children are trafficked across international borders.

Canada's solicitor general reported in 1997 that migrant trafficking accounts for 8,000 to 16,000 illegal immigrants in Canada every year, many who are female youths and children forced to work in Canada's booming sex trade industry. The same report estimates that those profiting from the illegal trafficking of women and children in Canada earn as much as \$400 million annually.

After arms and drugs, the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation is the third largest source of profit for organized crime.

In a recent workshop in Windsor, Ontario, it was noted that Windsor has the highest per capita number of prostitutes in North America.

**Leader:** *Pose questions for discussion. A flip chart may be used. The scribe is to assist. (20–30 minutes)*

1. What is trafficking?
2. What are the forms of trafficking?
3. How/why do women and children become victims of trafficking?
4. Why is human trafficking harmful?
5. What activities may be included in trafficking?
6. How might we recognize signs of trafficking in our communities?
7. What can we do to help eradicate trafficking?

**Leader:** *Wrap up and closing prayer (5 minutes)*

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** Jesus, You call each of us to join You, to follow Your teaching and share in Your life mission. As our friend and teacher, You ask us now to open our minds and hearts to the sorrows and sufferings of others in our world – to make room in our consciousness for the pain that others bear – their fear and shame, their despair and terror.

Give us the courage we need to listen to their stories with hearts united in solidarity; to inspire in us Your own compassion and resolve. As we hear of their plight, may we also hear Your voice directing us to action for their cause. Amen

### **Suggested related activities**

1. Review the education packet “Trafficking in Women and Children” (available free-of-charge from national office).
2. Plan a prayer service for women and children who have been trafficked (see education packet).
3. View a video and discuss.
  - a. *Sisters and Daughters Betrayed* – video is 30 minutes long and available from Global Fund for Women, 400-1375 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109; telephone: (415) 202-7640, ext. 301; or by e-mail: [orders@globalfundforwomen.org](mailto:orders@globalfundforwomen.org). The cost is \$25.00 U.S. plus shipping.

- b. *So Great a Violence: Prostitution, Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry* – video was produced by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and is available from CATW, P.O. Box 9338, N. Amherst, MA 01059; fax: (413) 367-9262; or e-mail [info@catwinternational.org](mailto:info@catwinternational.org). Videos cost \$29.95 U.S. each plus \$7.00 for postage. Only pre-paid orders are accepted.
4. Invite a knowledgeable guest speaker from the local area to discuss the topic, e.g., a member of a religious congregation involved in work with refugees or persons who have been trafficked or a member of the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police who may have information on the problems of prostitution and trafficking in your area.
  5. Encourage council members to read Victor Malarek's book *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade*, available at your local library or bookstore, or may be ordered on-line at [www.arcadepub.com](http://www.arcadepub.com).

Prepared by Ann Doucet, National Community Life Chairperson and  
Terri Scott, Manitoba Provincial President

2005