

## Human Trafficking:

Do my thoughts reflect those of Christ and His Church?

### Human Trafficking:

**Human trafficking** can also be referred to as “trafficking in persons”. By definition, human trafficking means “the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for forced labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion,” irrespective of whether the person has been moved from one location to another. <sup>1</sup>

**Forced labor** includes situations where persons are pressured to work through violence or intimidation, or strong-armed into work because of accumulated debt, retention of identity papers, or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities. <sup>2</sup>

According to the International Labour Organization, based in Switzerland:

- Almost 21 million people are victims of forced labor – 11.4 million women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys.
- Private individuals or enterprises exploit approximately 19 million victims and the state or rebel groups exploit over 2 million.
- Of those exploited by individuals or enterprises, 4.5 million are victims of forced sexual exploitation.
- Forced labor in the private economy generates \$150 billion in illegal profits per year.
- Domestic work, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and entertainment are among the sectors most concerned.

Migrant workers and indigenous people are particularly vulnerable to forced labor. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "2014 Trafficking in Persons Report." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, June 2014. Web. Jan. 2016. <<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014>>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Meaning of Forced Labour*. International Labour Organization, Mar. 2014. Web. Jan. 2016. <[www.ilo.org/forced-labour/lang--en...](http://www.ilo.org/forced-labour/lang--en...)>.

<sup>3</sup> *ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: Results and Methodology*. Geneva: ILO, 2012. *2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labor*. ILO. Web. Jan. 2016. <[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_182004.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf)>.

**Sexual Exploitation**, although legally defined in different ways for many different countries, entails the exploitation of others through prostitution.

According to the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, a U.S. Department of State organization:

- Most victims of sexual trafficking into and within the U.S. are women and children, mainly under the age of 18.
- There are no known cases of adult males being sexually trafficked in the U.S.
- Although human trafficking does not require that the victim be removed from the place of residence, such removal is common. Victims can be relocated anywhere from several miles to hundreds of miles from their original homes.

A grooming process ensnares girls to become victims of trafficking. It can start as a developing relationship with an older man and this progresses to an intimate relationship, at which point he suggests a trip for the two of them. This trip will be used to introduce the girl to other “friends”. She will be encouraged to become intimate with these “friends” and, if she refuses, violent consequences ensue. If the girl has witnessed other girls who “rocked the boat” and “paid the price”, she will become intimidated enough to see no way out of the situation. She must hand over all funds received to the boyfriend or face punishment. If caught in the act of prostitution, she is told thus to use a story that will not incriminate the boyfriend, facing jail time on her own. The girl will buy into this life simply because she is alone, with no family support, and now has a force that dominates her. She will possibly become psychologically dependent on the boyfriend. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue." (n.d.): n. pag. *Domestic Human Trafficking - An Internal Issue*. HSTC, Dec. 2008. Web. Jan. 2016. <[www.state.gov/documents/organization/113612.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/113612.pdf)>.

# Life Matters . . . continued

## Human Trafficking:

*I have always been distressed at the lot of those who are victims of various kinds of human trafficking. How I wish that all of us would hear God's cry: "Where is your brother?" (Gen 4:9). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labour? Let us not look the other way.*

-- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*<sup>1</sup>

## What does the USCCB say?

"It is a horrific crime against the fundamental rights and dignity of the human person and takes a variety of forms in every region of the world. Through sexual slavery (*commercial sex acts*), the body becomes little more than an object to be exploited. For victims of forced labor, the body is considered a disposable machine, made to work long hours for little or no pay and for the profit of others. In both cases the person who is enslaved is treated as an object for another's benefit. The person's God-given human dignity is either ignored or forgotten."<sup>1</sup>

"According to the U.S. State Department, every country in the world is affected by trafficking; it estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Of these, approximately 80% are female, and up to 50% are minors. *The United Nation's International Labor Organization's 2012 Estimate on Forced Labor* shocks the conscience."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Catholic Church and Human Trafficking Policy." *The Catholic Church and Human Trafficking Policy*. N.p., n.d. Web. Jan. 2016. <<http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-policy/the-catholic-church-and-human-trafficking-policy.cfm>>.

<sup>2</sup> *ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: Results and Methodology*. Geneva: ILO, 2012. *2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labor*. ILO. Web. Jan. 2016. <[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_182004.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf)>.

<sup>3</sup> "Wqed.org." *WQED*. N.p., 23 Feb. 2017. Web. Jan. 2016. <<http://www.wqed.org/tv/watch/?id=885&series=6>>.

## What Can You Do?

- Educate yourself about human trafficking and isolate areas where you can help to stop it.
- Become an advocate for the victims of this crime by getting involved in organizations that help stop human trafficking both domestically and worldwide.
- Investigate programs such as, "The Project to End Human Trafficking", established by Dr. Mary Burke through Carlow College.
- Lobby politicians to impress upon them why the eradication of human trafficking should be their priority.
- Hold a community event to raise awareness of human trafficking and how it affects your community. This is a \$32 billion industry in the USA and affects 20% of the world population.<sup>3</sup>
- Stop using products from companies that overlook human trafficking in their production chains.
- Fast and pray for the victims of human trafficking and for its eradication.

## For more information:

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