

A Day of Prayer to End the Scourge of Modern Slavery

Saturday, 8th February was a significant feast for all those fighting Modern-Day Slavery, writes Anthony Brown of Caritas

Anti-Trafficking



St Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. On this day Catholics are encouraged to pray for all those affected by the crimes of modern slavery and human trafficking, and the people that volunteer and work to eradicate it. St Josephine Bakhita bore 144 physical scars throughout her life, which were received after she was kidnapped at the age of nine and sold into slavery. In 1882 her suffering was alleviated after she was bought for the Italian Consul where she received kindness, respect, peace and joy. She was received into the Catholic Church in 1890, joined the Canossian sisters and made final profession in 1896. The next fifty years of her life were spent witnessing to God's love. She was a source of encouragement to many and her constant smile won people's hearts. Surrounded by the sisters, she died on 8 February 1947.

There are an estimated 40 million victims of modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise, exploiting people for little or no pay. It takes many forms including; forced labour, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. It affects every country in the world with an estimated 136,000 victims hidden in plain sight in the UK. The eradication of modern slavery and the pastoral care of victims is a priority for the Catholic Church. Pope Francis continually draws the attention of the Church and the wider world to this "a wound on the body of contemporary humanity".

Caritas Anti-Trafficking News

Ann Cooney, our latest recruit, joined Caritas Anti-Trafficking at the beginning of December 2019. Ann will help us achieve our aim to free Salford Diocese of Modern Day Slavery by 2025. When the United Nations met in 2015 they set their goals for achievement by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 is: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. Within the context of a global aim to free the world of Modern Day Slavery by 2030, 2025 seems to be a realistic aim for Salford Diocese.

IDENTIFYING A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Show signs of physical or psychological abuse, or look malnourished
- Appear withdrawn, lack self confidence or seem anxious or fearful
- Avoid eye contact or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Little understanding of English.
- Act as if instructed or coached by someone else, or allows others to speak for them when spoken to directly
- Always wears the same clothes day in day out, or wears clothes that may not be suitable for their work
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation or live and work at the same address
- Control over their movement, or moving as a group or individuals of people at unusual hours.

If you see anything that looks suspicious call the Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700**

 **Santa Marta Group**
CHURCH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMBATTING MODERN SLAVERY



Ann will focus initially on two things. There is a great need for more awareness on modern-day slavery in our schools, not only for pupils to be the eyes and ears of the Police but also for safeguarding. County Lines have become a massive problem with an estimated 2,000 lines and 80,000 young and/or vulnerable people bound up in it by organized crime groups who will stop at nothing to hold victims in their clutches with drug addiction and threats of violence. We are working in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and Ann will help with the development and delivery of resources for children in both primary and secondary schools. Secondly, the homeless are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and in one instance a man rescued had been taken from the street 25 years earlier and held in slavery ever since. We will audit homeless charities and develop and deliver training and resources according to need, in partnership with Lancashire Police.

