



**SISTERS**  
OF THE PRESENTATION  
*of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



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*Stand Together*  
*and spend yourselves for the poor*

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## JUSTICE UPDATE – AUGUST 2007

### **ANALYZING THE ISSUE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING...**

Having examined a definition of human trafficking and recognizing that individuals in this situation are subject to abuse, we move to the process of analyzing human trafficking. In the process of analysis we examine how systems (i.e. economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, etc.) impact the issue and how the systems interrelate and impact one another in regard to the issue. While it is difficult to explore all these systems in this space, we can explore a few to grow in understanding the complexity of this issue.

To **examine causes** we study the supply and demand for human trafficking. Realities on the **supply side** include: feminization of poverty where 70% of the world's poor are women, economic disparities within and between countries, patriarchy that discriminates against women and girl-children, racial discrimination and related intolerance, civil and military conflicts that push people to flee their countries (80% are women and children), and corruption by police or law enforcement. On the **demand side** of the equation, we acknowledge the demand by employers for unskilled and cheap labor especially in domestic or entertainment sectors, the commercial sex industry that continues to expand, the male attitudes and perceptions of women in society, the patriarchy that results in unequal power relations between men and women, the restrictive migration policies that decrease potential for regular migration, and the exploitative political and economic relations that result in deteriorating conditions for those who live in the "South."

### **CONNECTIONS:**

"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights." (John Paul II)

Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves. (Earth Charter, #9b)

### **REFLECTION:**

While not exhausting the causes, we ask what are the key factors underlying the practice of trafficking? We know that trafficking often operates out of the reach of the legal system and can be difficult to identify because victims remain silent due to fear or threats. Technology enables international transactions and falsification of documents in a timely matter. In terms of some of the key agents, we recognize tour operators or travel agencies, employment agents, family members,

schoolteachers, village headmen, brothel owners, pimps and procurers, and local women recruiters. What factors underlie the practice of treating women and children as commodities?

We know that traffickers enlist the help of local persons to identify vulnerable persons/families. Often, in trafficking, there is a direct sale by a family member, deceit, debt bondage, bribes, and kidnapping. While we may think many of these can be avoided, we need only look at these acts through the eyes of the causes above and we find it more difficult to act.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. Economic factors contribute greatly to trafficking. Jubilee USA is gathering a “collection of plates” that urge Congress of our hunger for debt cancellation while we participate in a **CANCEL THE DEBT FAST** from September 6 to October 15. Directions for initiating this project in your ministry or living environment can be found at <http://www.jubileeusa.org/> (click on: send us your plates). The plates are mailed to Jubilee USA by October 15, 2007. Jubilee USA will deliver them to legislators.

2. In preparation for International Peace Day on September 21, please contact Senators and Representatives in their home districts this month. Express deep concern for the **IRAQ WAR** issue and the need for peace. Urge legislators to not only withdraw troops from the area but also to work at a comprehensive peace strategy, provide an environment for an Iraqi peace conference and work at enabling refugees and the internally displaced to obtain money or help from groups without Iraqi governmental barriers. More details at:

[http://www.networklobby.org/issues/iraq/Iraq\\_recommendations7-29-07.htm](http://www.networklobby.org/issues/iraq/Iraq_recommendations7-29-07.htm)

3. “A new report entitled, “**Take Back the Tap**” shows choosing tap water over bottled water is safer for your health, your pocketbook, and the environment. Giving up bottled water in favor of tap isn't enough. Cities and towns need continued investment in pipes and treatment plants to ensure that future generations have access to safe, affordable, public water.” What body of water does my tap water come from? Is my tap water a public utility or has it been privatized? The report is at:

<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/pubs/reports/take-back-the-tap>

**Phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses** for each state’s representatives can be found at the link below and then typing in your zip code.

<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home>