



SISTERS
OF THE PRESENTATION
of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Stand Together
and spend yourselves for the poor

OCTOBER 2007

Taking action on human trafficking

We come to the last phase of our process thus far, and now we may need to determine the next stage. While action from the theological reflection process can be individual or communal, we can be sure that how we understand the root causes (i.e. demand, poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, etc.) will determine our action toward the issue.

Before any plan is proposed and finalized, there is an assumption that time has been set aside to be with this issue as a community of faith to promote further dialogue and insights. When the time comes to develop a comprehensive action plan, it will likely address the political, economic, social, legal and institutional dimensions of human trafficking. In addition, consideration of the impact we may have is also necessary.

Assuming we process together the issue of human trafficking, we may have asked, "What do I envision myself and my congregation doing as a result of our being with the issue?" There will likely be countless other challenges around this issue such as, "How do we promote the dignity of women? How do we acknowledge human sexuality as gift? What are our previous actions on condemning exploitation and slavery? Do we have examples of work for the liberation of those enslaved? What observations of mutual respect in relationships between us and others exist?" In refining the plan, we inquire, "How does this plan fit with who we are and our mission statement?"

Personally, each of us can make a commitment to promote social intolerance of human rights violations; research what organizations or groups in our area can do on the issue; pray for those who are victims of trafficking; and study the immigration and trafficking laws at state and national levels among other creative approaches.

On the other hand, partnership often leads to a more effective pool of resources, expertise and greater impetus for change. A collaborative and balanced approach to research, data collection and dissemination, education, and advocacy are all integral to the success of an action plan.

Communally, potential actions may include working at canceling debt in developing countries, promoting the education and formation of women, addressing the exploitation of women and children, and ending behavior that threatens global warming and climate change (that threatens life on Earth).

CONNECTIONS:

"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights." (John Paul II, 5.15.2002)

“The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person.”
(U.S. Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, #15)

ACTIONS:

1. As a follow-up to study and reflection on **human trafficking**, either individually or in small groups, prepare an action. Set a reasonable amount of time to be accountable. Contacts, resources, and actions are listed at www.catwinternational.org, www.ecpat.net, www.antislavery.org, and www.usccb.org/mrs/traffickingweb.shtml

2. October 14-21 is a **global trade week** of action in support of fair trade. The goal of the week is to call for fair trade on all global agricultural products and to challenge those structures that impose unfair trade. A resource guide is available at www.tradeweek.org that includes exploring the interactions between trade, agriculture, food and human rights and includes stories, action ideas, liturgical aides and Biblical reflections. In addition, contact your Representative to support the **Jubilee Act H.R. 2634** and to reject the **Peru-United States Trade Agreement** soon.

3. **World Food Day**, October 16th, is an international event with the intention of increasing awareness, understanding, and year-around action to alleviate hunger. This year's focus on the **links between climate change, hunger and poverty** will guide activities. For more information, resources and events, visit www.fao.org/wfd2007/wfd_links.html or www.worldfooddayusa.org/. As you continue to monitor progress on the 2007 Farm Bill, you are urged to contact your legislators to fund programs that reduce domestic and global hunger.

4. The **Gulf Coast Recovery Act of 2007** (S.1668) was introduced on June 20 by Senate Banking Committee Chair Christopher Dodd and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). The bill proposes a none-for-one replacement of all HUD-assisted or public housing on the Gulf Coast and funding for the Road Home program. Urge Senators (877.510.5351) to support S. 1668 and funding to implement it.

Phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses for each state's representatives can be found at: <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home>
and then typing in your zip code.