



SISTERS
OF THE PRESENTATION
of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Stand Together
and spend yourselves for the poor

JUSTICE UPDATE – September 2007

Theological reflection on human trafficking...

How much of the image of God do we experience in those whom we meet? How deep do we allow that image of God to penetrate? How often does our schedule of hurried activity allow us to experience and listen uninterruptedly to others? These challenging questions call us to solidarity with our sisters and brothers. Called to constant conversion by baptism, **theological reflection requires that insights from experiences, culture and theological tradition lead to thoughtful, intentional meaning and action.**

Making meaning of our lives is basic and is most pressing when there are disruptions to one's worldview or way of seeing. It is easy to look for ways to bypass discomfort and rush to superficial meaning. Yet, feelings of discomfort provide new insights when fully engaged and explored. It is important to be with feelings of discomfort and pray with them. Asking questions such as, "why I think trafficking is so prevalent" or "what is it about the world I live in that makes it so easy for human trafficking to occur?" is a part of making meaning. We can rest in moments with ourselves and the issue and listen to our heart speaking as images are evoked and connected with stories, metaphors or other aspects of Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

As a follower of Christ, it is natural to be disturbed by human trafficking and the appalling violation of rights individuals suffer. The violation of a human being is also a violation of God's temple and an insult to God. When any person is oppressed, the human family is diminished. We are christened by Christ to walk into messy, ugly, and uncomfortable situations. Christ risked judgment by peers, the hatred of the religious elite, and the questioning of best friends. Are we not also asked to be in solidarity with God's presence in our sisters and brothers?

In contemplating human trafficking, we realize that changes are necessary to those suffering from being trafficked. We ask what role we can play in the changes that need to be made and how will we go about implementing those changes or being in solidarity with a group that is able to make changes.

CONNECTIONS

Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous siblings. He would have endured the range of dangers and indignities associated with being trafficked. (Genesis 37)

"Trafficking in persons in which men, women, and children from all over the globe are transported to other countries for the purposes of forced prostitution or labor, inherently rejects the

dignity of the human person and exploits conditions of global poverty. "
(U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, 2003)

ACTIONS

1. Reflect upon experiences in regard to **human trafficking** and the knowledge gained from the situation. Bring this to prayer and the theological reflection process. What further insights have I gained? What values in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching are calling me to action?
2. The Senate Agriculture Committee will meet this month to finalize their version of the **2007 Farm Bill**. Contact your Senators, especially Chair of the Committee Tom Harkin. Urge them to support a farm bill that creates an equity commodity title; institutes meaningful payment limits; and strengthens programs in nutrition, conservation and rural development.
3. **Women and the Word Synod 2008**: Building on the words of Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 about the need to "offer more space, more positions of responsibility to women," and toward the 2008 Synod, "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church," Future Church has launched a Postcard to Bishops Campaign. The message respectfully asks that the bishops include in their reports requests to invite women biblical experts (none were included in the 2005 Synod), to devote more pastoral attention to Jesus and Paul's inclusion of women leaders, expand opportunities for women preachers, and restore biblical women leaders to lectionary readings in which their witness was diminished or deleted. Obtain Synod background information at: <http://www.futurechurch.org/watw/index.htm> and e-postcards at: www.futurechurch.org/watw/postcards
4. Recently, the Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc. sent an advocacy action urging us to visit <http://www.cbisonline.com/page.asp?id=891> to **help CBIS protect shareholder's rights to file shareholder resolutions**. It appears that Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Christopher Cox is planning new rules that would weaken or potentially eliminate shareholder's rights. An adaptable letter is present with an address to e-mail your letter.

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.